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NOTES,

CRITICAL AND EXPLANATORY,

ON THE BOOK OF

GENESIS.

FROM THE COVENANT TO THE CLOSE.

BY

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BOOK I. of the History in Genesis brings us through seventeen chapters, to BOOK II., THE PATRIARCHAL HISTORY OF THE COVENANT.

The Covenant with Abraham is the pivot upon which the whole history turns. The Covenant with Adam was "the covenant of works," which was violated by our first parents. The Covenant with Noah has been called "the covenant of forbearance," providing for man's continued occupancy of the earth, and for the permanence of natural laws. The Covenant with Abraham was "the Covenant of Grace," to which all the foregoing was preparatory. Adam was the father of the race. Noah was the father of the preserved remnant. Abraham was the father of the believing remnant. The Covenant with Abraham stretches forward through the Mosaic and Christian dispensations. The Son of God, as Redeemer, "laid hold on the nature of the seed of Abraham," not of the seed of Adam. (Heb. 2 : 16.) And if we be Christ's, then are we Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise. (Gal. 3 : 29.) Abraham, through the son of promise, issues in Israel, who is the father of the twelve patriarchs; and these are assured of their title to the promised land. Joseph, like Abraham, through the bondage of the world-kingdom, turns with faith to the land of promise, as theirs by covenant grant; and there they command their bones to be deposited, in faith of their heirship as guaranteed to them in the bond. Paul shows how "God preached before the gospel unto Abraham," and how "Abraham's seed," in the Covenant promise is preëminently and emphatically CHRIST. (Gal. 3 : 8-16.) And Stephen shows how their exile in Egypt had a bearing upon the future conversion of the Gentiles. (Acts 7, 9, etc.):

Dr. Smith (See Bib. Dict. Art. *Genesis*) has said that "the history of Abraham holds the same relation to the other portions of Genesis which the giving of the Law does to the entire Pentateuch. Abraham is the father of the Jewish nation; to Abraham the land of Canaan is first given in promise. Isaac and Jacob, though also prominent figures in the narrative, yet do but inherit the promise as Abraham's children; and Jacob, especially, is the chief connecting link in the chain of events, which led finally to the possession of the land of Canaan. In like manner the former section of the Book is written with the same obvious purpose. It is a part

of the writer's plan to tell us what the Divine preparation of the world was, in order to show, first, the significance of the call of Abraham, and next, the true nature of the Jewish Theocracy. He does not (as *Tuch* asserts) work backwards from Abraham till he comes, in spite of himself, to the beginning of all things. He does not ask, Who was Abraham? answering, Of the posterity of Shem. And who was Shem? A son of Noah. And who was Noah? etc. But he begins with the Creation of the world, because the God who created the world and the God who revealed Himself to the fathers is the same God. Jehovah, who commanded His people to keep holy the seventh day, is the same God who in six days created the heavens and the earth, and rested on the seventh day from all His work. . . . He who made a covenant with Noah, and through him with all the families of the earth, is the God who also made Himself known as the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob. In a word, Creation and Redemption are eternally linked together. This is the idea which, in fact, gives its shape to the history, although its distinct enunciation is reserved for the New Testament. There we learn that all things were created by and for CHRIST, and that in Him all things consist, (Col. 1 : 16, 17,) and that by the church is made known unto principalities and powers the manifold wisdom of God. It would be impossible for a book which tells us of the beginning of the church not to tell us also of the beginning of the world.

"The Book of Genesis has thus a character at once special and universal, It embraces the world. It speaks of God as the God of the whole human race. But, as the introduction to Jewish history, it makes the universal interest subordinate to the national. Its design is to show how God revealed Himself to the first fathers of the Jewish race, in order that He might make to Himself a nation who should be His witnesses in the midst of the earth. This is the inner principle of unity which pervades the Book. Its external framework exhibits five principal persons as the pillars (so to speak) on which the whole superstructure rests,—Adam, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob."

The leading facts of this history were recited by the covenant people in their triumphal Psalms, and thus were celebrated in their temple service, to incite the faith of the nation in God's covenant care. What He has faithfully done in the past is the joyous guaranty for all that He has promised to accomplish in the future. *Hengstenberg* has well said that "such Psalms as the cv., cvi., and lxxviii. show very manifestly how firmly the facts of sacred history were rooted in the Israelitish mind, and how absurd it is to institute any comparison between these facts and the myths or traditions of a heathen antiquity."

The cv. Psalm gives an outline of the covenant history from the promise of Canaan to the possession of it; and the first twenty-three verses in a beautiful synopsis comprise the great events of this Book II. of Genesis:

“O give thanks unto the LORD; call upon his name; make known his deeds among the people.

Sing unto him, sing psalms unto him: talk ye of all his wondrous works.

Glory ye in his holy name: let the heart of them rejoice that seek the LORD.

Seek the LORD, and his strength: seek his face evermore.

Remember his marvellous works that he hath done; his wonders, and the judgments of his mouth;

O ye seed of Abraham his servant, ye children of Jacob his chosen.

He *is* the LORD our God: his judgments *are* in all the earth.

He hath remembered his covenant forever, the word *which* he commanded to a thousand generations;

Which *covenant* he made with Abraham, and his oath unto Isaac;

And confirmed the same unto Jacob for a law, *and* to Israel *for* an everlasting covenant:

Saying, Unto thee will I give the land of Canaan, the lot of your inheritance:

When they were *but* a few men in number; yea, very few, and strangers in it.

When they went from one nation to another, from *one* kingdom to another people;

He suffered no man to do them wrong; yea, he reprov'd kings for their sakes;

Saying, Touch not mine anointed, and do my prophets no harm.

Moreover he called for a famine upon the land: he brake the whole staff of bread.

He sent a man before them, *even* Joseph, *who* was sold for a servant:

Whose feet they hurt with fetters: he was laid in iron:

Until the time that his word came: the word of the LORD tried him.

The king sent and loosed him; *even* the ruler of the people, and let him go free.

He made him lord of his house, and ruler of all his substance:

To bind his princes at his pleasure, and teach his senators wisdom.

Israel also came into Egypt; and Jacob sojourned in the land of Ham.”



THE BOOK OF GENESIS.

CHAPTER XVIII.

AND the Lord appeared unto him in the ^aplains of Mamre: and he sat in the tent-door in the heat of the day;

a ch. 13: 18, and 14: 13.

BOOK II.

PATRIARCHAL HISTORY OF THE COVENANT.

CHAPTER XVIII.

§ 39. THE COVENANT ANGEL APPEARS TO ABRAHAM AT MAMRE. INTERCESSION FOR SODOM.

God here appears to Abraham in closest friendship and fellowship. Jehovah had revealed himself to Abraham as the covenant God, and had sealed to him and to his house the covenant of His grace. He will now display Himself as visiting judgments upon the wicked, and chastening His people who dwell among them, yet so as to work the deliverance of His chosen. He is a jealous God. (Ex. 20: 5.) He will also show His covenant faithfulness by revealing to Abraham His purposes of judgment upon the wicked people among whom His pious relative dwelt. Besides, He will take this occasion to reassure to Abraham and his house the covenant promise. Especially He will meet the incredulity of Sarah, and bringing out to view her unbelief, He will impart to her a living faith,

by virtue of which she shall be enabled to fulfil all the conditions of God's covenant with her house. (Heb. 11: 11.) There is no unmeaning repetition here.

1. *And the Lord (Jehovah) appeared unto him*—as to one to whom He had so recently sealed His covenant of grace. The whole object of the visit will be seen to be confidential, and in fulfilment of His covenant. The mode of the appearing is narrated vs. 2. ¶ *In the plains*—in or *by the oaks*. Vulg.—*In the plain*. (See ch. 12: 6.) The plain (oak) of Moreh. ¶ *Mamre*. (See ch. 14: 13, 24.) Mamre was an ally of Abram, and under the shade of his oak-grove the patriarch dwelt in the interval between his residence at Bethel and at Beersheba. (Ch. 13: 18; 18: 1.) ¶ *Sat in the tent door*. This is the Oriental habit. Sitting in the open door of the tent to catch the cooling air, *in the heat of the day*, is the common picture of Eastern life; the sheikh, or chief of

2 ^b And he lifted up his eyes and looked, and lo, three men stood by him: ^c and when he saw *them*, he ran to meet them from the tent-door, and bowed himself toward the ground,

3 And said, My lord, if I now have found favor in thy sight, pass not away, I pray thee, from thy servant:

4 Let ^d a little water, I pray you, be fetched, and wash your feet, and rest yourselves under the tree:

b Heb. 13:2. c ch. 19:1; 1 Pet. 4:9. d ch. 19:2, and 43:24.

a family or encampment occupying this prominent position, and ready to walk out and greet the passing traveller. This we have frequently seen.

2. The mode of this Divine appearing is here related. It was in human form. This putting on the garb of our humanity was a hint of the Incarnation, (Phil. 2:7.) ¶ *Three men.* In ch. 19:1, these are expressly called "*angels.*" But they appeared as men. So it was at the resurrection. (Luke 24:4.) One of the three was recognized by the patriarch as Jehovah. We find two of them going on to Sodom, (ch. 19:1,) where they are called "the two angels," (Heb.) The one Divine personage was detained in the interview with Abraham. ¶ *Stood by him.* Stationed before him. Suddenly they appeared in that position. The custom of travellers in the East is to start early, and towards the noon to seek a resting place in some shady retreat, until the cooler part of the day. ¶ *Ran to meet them.* This is the habit in the East when it is some superior personage who appears. The sheikh comes out from the door of his tent and makes a low bow quite towards the ground—and sometimes conducts the stranger to his tent with every token of welcome.

3. *My Lord*, (אֲדֹנָי) or *O Lord*, (Onk. *Jehovah.*) Abraham addresses the chief of the three as a superior personage. The name is applied to such as have high authority, and is

used specially of God. So Abraham seems to have recognized this one. (See ch. 15:28. See, also, vs. 27, 30, 31, 32; ch. 20:4.) It is expressly stated (vs. 1) that Jehovah appeared to Abraham on this occasion. The narrative varies between the singular and the plural number, (vs. 3, 10, 13,) according as one or more of the three is referred to. It is objected by some that God should be understood as using food. But it was in such condescending human form that he appeared—and as the Angel of the Covenant it was meant to foreshadow the Incarnation. It does not by any means confound the physical and spiritual, much less does it prove that spiritual beings need food, or use it. But here God appears for the first time on record as *man* among men, to show the reality of His Being, and of His affinity with men, and by this typical act to assure the patriarch of the Divine communion and fellowship. ¶ *If now I have found favor*, etc. This is the common Oriental language of reverence. He begs the heavenly visitant to tarry. (So the two disciples at Emmaus, Luke 24:29.)

4. He now addresses the three together, urging upon them his hospitalities. These are such as belonged to the Oriental customs, and are found to this day. ¶ *Water.* Using sandals and travelling the dusty roads of the East, water for the feet is a necessary part of hospitality. ¶ *Rest yourselves.* This is the custom

5 And ^eI will fetch a morsel of bread, and ^fcomfort ye your hearts; after that ye shall pass on: ^gfor therefore are ye come to your servant. And they said, So do, as thou hast said.

6 And Abraham hastened into the tent unto Sarah, and said, Make ready quickly three measures of fine meal, knead *it*, and make cakes upon the hearth.

7 And Abraham ran unto the herd, and fetched a calf tender

e Judg. 6: 18, and 13: 15.

f Judg. 19: 5; Ps. 104: 15.

g ch. 19: 8, and 33: 10,

for travellers in Eastern countries. The shade of a tree from the heat of the noonday sun is most refreshing; and in lack of it the shadow of a great rock is often a rich luxury.

¶ *The tree.* One of the wide-spreading, umbrageous oaks, or the grove of oaks already referred to, (vs. 1.)

5. *A morsel.* "The phrases 'A little water,' and a 'morsel of bread' flow from a thoughtful courtesy." ¶ *Comfort ye your hearts.* (Margin — *Stay your hearts.*) This phrase is found also, Judg. 19: 5, 8. "The whole *stay* of bread," (Is. 3: 1.) ¶ *For therefore,* etc. He did not mean so much that this was plainly their object, seeking his hospitality — but that their coming was all of God. He recognized in it altogether a Divine call upon his hospitality. "Godliness after all is the best politeness." — *Candlish.*

¶ *Ye have come.* Heb. — *Ye have passed over upon your servant.* The same word as just before used — "Ye shall *pass on*." ¶ *So do.* "There are no affected declinatures — no multiplied apologies — no exaggerated professions of humility or gratitude. There is simple acquiescence." — *Candlish.*

6. The preparations were made with all promptitude. Abraham *hastened into the tent* unto Sarah, and said, *Hasten* three measures, etc. The same word is used in the latter clause, though it is rendered "Make ready quickly." The oriental life is here brought to view. There is

flour at hand, but it is to be kneaded and baked for the guests. Baking was commonly done every day, but there was not enough bread for the strangers. Bread was baked on the heated hearth. The hot embers laid over the dough soon baked it. (1 Kings 17: 13.) Bread was also baked in the oven, which was of stone or earthen ware or metal, half-filled with gravel, upon which the dough was laid, or, sometimes, a thin cake of dough was laid on the outside of this oven, and very rapidly baked. The *hearth-cakes* here were baked by the first-named process. ¶ *Three measures* — *about three pecks.* Others make it $1\frac{1}{2}$ Eng. bushels. $\frac{3}{10}$ of "a measure" was "an *omer*," which was considered an abundance for one man for a day. There was therefore a large supply provided for the guests.

7. *Ran unto the herd.* The herd of the Orientals was a dependence for any such special occasion. Flesh meat was holiday fare, except for the rich. (1 Kings 4: 23; Neh. 5: 18.) The Patriarch himself, in true Eastern style, runs to his own herd, and brings the calf, which was a special luxury. "The *fatted calf*" was the choicest provision for a feast. (Luke 15: 23.) Here the term *calf* is in the Heb. *the son of a bull.* ¶ *Tender and good.* In best condition for killing. It was not the business of the patriarch to kill and cook the animal, but he handed it over to a *young man*, (Heb. *the young man*),

and good, and gave *it* unto a young man; and he hasted to dress it.

8 And ^h he took butter, and milk, and the calf which he had dressed, and set *it* before them; and he stood by them under the tree, and they did eat.

9 ¶ And they said unto him, Where is Sarah thy wife? And he said, Behold, ⁱ in the tent.

h ch. 19: 3. i ch. 24: 67.

the servant. (See ch. 14: 24.) ¶ *And he hasted to dress it.* Heb.—*to do it*—*to prepare it* by dressing and cooking.

8. *He*—Abraham attended upon his guests. *Note*.—God is the guest of Abraham here. Abraham is His guest now and forever. (Matt. 8: 11.) *Butter*. This is commonly clotted cream. The milk is chiefly that of the goat, which is very rich, and sweet, rather sickening to an unpracticed taste. This kind of milk we found abundant in Palestine, and no other. And the use of it for some months in tea, led us to dispense with milk altogether in this way, since that time. The milk of the camel is also used by the Arabs. That which Jael gave to Sisera has been thought to be camel's milk, as it became somewhat intoxicating when stale, and may have produced upon him a stupefying effect. (Judg. 4: 19.) ¶ *He stood by them*. The pronoun is emphatic, in the Hebrew. *He* (Abraham) *was standing*—*stood by them*—expressive of his veneration for the distinguished visitants, perhaps also in the attitude of serving, which is rather "*stood before*." ¶ *And they did eat*. The *Vulg.* joins this clause to the next verse. "And when they had eaten, they said to him." "This" (says *Candlish*) "is a singular instance of condescension—the only recorded instance of the kind, before the Incarnation. On other occasions, this same illustrious Being appeared to the fathers and conversed with them. But in those

cases he turned the offered banquet into a sacrifice in the smoke of which he ascended heavenward. (Judg. 6: 18–24; 13: 15–21.) But here he personally accepts the patriarch's hospitality and partakes of his fare—a greater miracle still than the other—implying more intimate and gracious friendship and more unreserved familiarity. He sits under his tree and shares his common meal."—II. p. 34. This record is referred to in the New Testament as encouraging the kindest hospitality to strangers, seeing that Abraham, in his pious courtesy to these travellers, found one of them to be the Angel of the Covenant—the Blessed Lord Jesus Christ. "Be not forgetful to entertain strangers; for thereby some have entertained angels unawares."—Heb. 13: 2. *Kurtz* remarks that this condescending act of Christ is to be understood as typical of Him who dwelt among us, (John 1: 14,) and was found in manner as a man, (Phil. 2: 7.) As they took upon themselves a human body they could also eat; as in Luke 24: 41.

9. The object of the visit was now made to appear. ¶ *And they said*, etc. It is now the question, not of the chief personage, but of the group of guests—a question which, in the East, from a stranger, would be regarded as impertinent if not insulting, in our time; but in that day there was altogether more of dignified freedom and ease among the women, and such an inquiry would not be so regarded. Abraham must

10 And he said, I ^k will certainly return unto thee ^l according to the time of life; and lo, ^m Sarah thy wife shall have a son. And Sarah heard *it* in the tent-door, which *was* behind him.

11 Now ⁿ Abraham and Sarah *were* old *and* well stricken in age; *and* it ceased to be with Sarah ^o after the manner of women.

12 Therefore Sarah ^p laughed within herself, saying, ^q After I am waxed old shall I have pleasure, my ^r lord being old also?

13 And the Lord said unto Abraham, Wherefore did Sarah

k ver. 14. l 2 Kings 4: 16. m ch. 17: 19, 21, and 21: 2; Rom. 9: 9. n ch. 17: 17; Rom. 4: 19; Heb. 11: 11, 12, 19. o ch. 31: 35; p. ch. 17: 17. q Luke 1: 18. r 1 Pet. 3: 6.

have been greatly surprised at this mention of his wife's name, with an inquiry after her, if he had not already recognized the Angel of the Covenant as one of the strangers. Sarah was inside of the tent, but near the entrance or doorway where she could hear.

10. *And he said.* The chief personage now speaks. The same who had already promised to Abraham, now repeats the covenant-promise for the benefit of Sarah. The Divine speaker knew Sarah to be within hearing. ¶ *I will certainly return unto thee.* The return is plainly to be in the way of fulfilling the promise, as stated in the last clause. Heb.—*Returning I will return to thee.* ¶ *According to the time of life.* Onk.—*According to the time when ye shall be alive.* Knobel, Gesenius, etc.—*The next spring.* De Wette and Jewish Com.—*About this time next year.* Benisch Fam. Bible—*At the time that liveth.* Persian—*According to the time of the birth.* Literally — *According to the living time*—the time of birth. See vs. 14. (As privately known to the Covenant Angel) “At the time appointed,” etc. This promise must have fully revealed the speaker as the Great Promiser. The event made good the promise. “The Lord visited Sarah as he said,” for Sarah conceived and bare Abraham a son in his old age, at the set time of which God had spoken to him. Ch.

21: 1, 2. ¶ *And Sarah heard.* Heb.—*In the entrance of the tent, and it was behind him.* This last clause indicates that Sarah standing in or near the doorway of the tent, was behind the speaker, and could not have been observed by him. His knowledge of her laughing, therefore, would tend to disclose His Divinity. The separate apartment in the tent for the females (in the rear) as in the modern *harem*, was not the custom of that day.

11. *Were old.* Heb.—*Old, coming (advancing) in days. It had ceased to be with Sarah the way according to women.* This is stated distinctly so as to call attention to the miracle.

12. *Laughed.* On this account Sarah treated the announcement with a mirthful incredulity. Yet she laughed not aloud, but secretly—*within herself*—and not in a way to put open contempt upon the statement. Abraham had laughed for joy; but Sarah's laugh is that of unbelief, making light of it. She expresses the ground of her incredulity. It was not that she despised the promise, but that she treated it as impossible. ¶ *My lord.* This word is not the same as in vs. 3, but different in the pointing. This is simply the title of honor which Sarah applies to her husband, “*calling him lord*,” and this is referred to in the New Testament as an example to married women. (1 Peter 3: 6.)

13. The narrative here discloses

laugh, saying, Shall I of a surety bear a child, which am old?

14 ^s Is any thing too hard for the Lord? ^t At the time appointed I will return unto thee, according to the time of life, and Sarah shall have a son.

15 Then Sarah denied, saying, I laughed not; for she was afraid. And he said, Nay; but thou didst laugh.

16 ¶ And the men rose up from thence, and looked toward Sodom: and Abraham went with them ^u to bring them on the way.

^s Jer. 32: 17; Zech. 8: 6; Matt. 3: 9, and 19: 26; Luke 1: 37. ^t ch. 17: 21; ver. 10; 2 Kings 4: 16. ^u Rom. 15: 24; 3 John 6.

the person of the chief speaker as "*Jehovah—the Lord*"—who had appeared to Abraham, (vs. 1.) This has not before been mentioned (vs. 10.) ¶ *Wherefore*. He now challenges Abraham in regard to Sarah's laughing, knowing as well that she would hear this as that she laughed within herself. "It was an aggravated offence, (Acts 5: 4) and nothing but grace saved her, (Rom. 9: 18.)"—*Jamieson*.

14. Heb.—*Is any word (thing) difficult from Jehovah (that is, as compared with Him) too hard for Jehovah?* This omnipotence of God is lost sight of by unbelief. ¶ *At the time appointed*. The promise that is doubted is renewed with additional force. The term is the same as in ch. 21: 2, where the fulfilment is noted accordingly.

15. *Denied*. Sarah, thus directly challenged, was overcome so far as to deny the act of laughing. It is ascribed to her terror that she so far denied the truth. But the language in vs. 12 indicates the probable ground of her denial. She had "*laughed within herself*,"—only indulged the feeling inwardly, making light of the Divine promise—"saying," etc.,—laughing in her words, and treating with levity the words of God. She replied, "*I laughed not*," and probably she did not openly and outright laugh; but instead of frankly acknowledging what was charged as to the fact she

resorted to this evasion. She is commended as "doing well" in reference to her "matronly simplicity and subjection;" but she is not to be exculpated for any departure from the simple truth. Peter declares that Christian women are the daughters of Sarah so long as *they do well*, and "*are not afraid with any amazement*." ¶ *For she was afraid*. It was this sudden fear which tempted her to dissemble.

16. This part of the celestial mission having now been accomplished, to assure Sarah and remove her doubts as a party in the covenant fulfilment, the step is now to be taken against the uncovenanted wicked. These are only the right and left-hand movements. The records are in their proper antithesis, as setting forth the Divine character and counsel. The right and left hand of the Judge are for the opposite parties. Life eternal is for the one and everlasting punishment for the other (Matt. 25: 46). ¶ *The men*. The human manner of the interview is still kept up. *They "rose up from thence and looked forth towards (to the face of) Sodom,"* set their faces towards Sodom, Luke 9: 53. *And Abraham was walking with them to send them forward*. This was also Oriental courtesy. See 3 Jno. 6; Acts 20: 38; Rom. 15: 24; 1 Cor. 16: 11.

17 And the Lord said, ^w Shall I hide from Abraham that thing which I do;

18 Seeing that Abraham shall surely become a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the earth shall be ^x blessed in him?

19 For I know him, ^y that he will command his children and

^w Ps. 25 : 14; Amos 3 : 7; John 15 : 15. ^x ch. 12 : 3, and 22 : 18; Acts 3 : 25; Gal. 3 : 8. ^y Deut. 4 : 9, 10, and 6 : 7; Josh. 24 : 15; Eph. 6 : 4.

17. *And Jehovah said.* Abraham was just now solemnly recognized as a party to the covenant which gave to him the ownership of the land. The Covenant Angel recognizes now with Himself the fitness of revealing to Abraham His purposes of wrath upon the wicked cities of the plain. The name of "Jehovah" (*Lord*) is used, often, as quite the same with "Angel of Jehovah," (Angel of the Lord.) See ch. 16 : 7, 11, 13; 18 : 14, 17; 19 : 24; 21 : 17, 18; 22 : 11, 13, 14; 31 : 11, 13; 32 : 25-30. Ex. 3 : 2, 4, 6, 14-16; 23 : 20-23; 32 : 34. Josh. 5 : 14; 6 : 2. Judg. 6 : 11, 14, 15, 18, 22; 13 : 3, 6, 21, 22. The Angel of the Lord is therefore the God-man Mediator, who, even before He became man in the person of Jesus, was in all ages the light of the world, and to whom especially the whole direction of the visible theocracy belonged." (See Heng. Christ. vol. i.) ¶ *Shall I hide.* Heb.—*Am I hiding* (emphatic. *I—covering*) *from Abraham what I am doing?* This inquiry may have been addressed to the attendant angels. The reasons against this hiding are intimated.

18. *Seeing that,* etc. Abraham had already been assured in the covenant that he should surely become a nation great and mighty and that all the nations of the earth should be blessed in him. These are God's purposes of grace. (1.) Jehovah will now vindicate Himself to the patriarch in regard to His judgment upon the wicked. He will therefore re-

veal His purpose of wrath, and allow Abraham to plead for lenity, and will show the lenity until Abraham ceases to plead, and thus in effect concedes the equity of God's wrathful visitation upon a city where there are not even *ten* righteous. (2.) This disclosure was due to Abraham, since his covenant obligations would be increased thereby. He would find herein only the greater incentive to fidelity in his household, through whom all the families of the earth were to be blessed. Deut. 29 : 13; Isa. 1 : 9, 10. (See Kurtz, Old. Cov. vol. i.) p. 242. ¶ *All the nations.* (כָּל הָעַמִּים) This is the covenant promise which assures Abraham that he shall be the channel for the conveyance of spiritual blessings to all nations of the earth. This could not refer to mere temporal blessings, as Abraham must plainly see, since some nations were to be subjugated and exterminated by him. Through him, as the father of the promised seed, the covenant blessings were to be extended to all nations. Here was the advertisement of God's plan for a world-wide church of Jew and Gentile. (See ch. 12 : 3; and 22 : 18.)

19. *For.* God's plan includes Abraham's fidelity to the covenant, and as it is a household covenant embracing his seed after him, so it binds him to be a faithful father and householder. This is the process by which God will accomplish his plan of grace, and the means are secured as well as the end. Family religion

his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the LORD, to do justice and judgment; that the LORD may bring upon Abraham that which he hath spoken of him.

20 And the LORD said, Because ^zthe cry of Sodom and Gomorrah is great, and because their sin is very grievous,

^z ch. 4: 10, and 19: 13; Jam. 5: 4.

is God's method for propagating His church. He therefore makes the covenant and its seals of a household nature — and thus the church has always been extended by means of a pious posterity. ¶ *I know him that* (יָדַעְתִּי) The Heb. conjunctive is here in the sense of *iva-telic*. *I know him (or have known him) as to this, to this end — that.* These cannot be regarded as *conditions*, so much as *means* all included in God's plan. Yet Abraham is to become such a universal blessing by exercising fidelity in his household. ¶ *Command.* This would lead him to exercise a lawful parental authority for controlling his house in the service of God. Eli's sin was that "his sons made themselves vile, and he restrained them not." (1 Sam. 3: 13). No harsh and austere enforcement is here contemplated, but the law of the house is to be religious; not leaving the children to the false principle of making their own choice or of doing as they please in religious things. ¶ *Household.* The dependants of a house ought to be under the religious rule of the family, and to enjoy its religious privileges of instruction and worship. ¶ *And they shall keep.* This is the close connection — the order of things — the interdependence of the means and the ends. The series of agencies which should secure the decreed result are all provided for in God's covenant of grace. (1.) God promises to bless the parental faithfulness to the salvation of the household. (2.) The children of the church are claimed as God's, and they have

special promises and provisions, and it should be expected that they will grow up under the pious instruction and example of the parents, as willows by the water-courses. (Isa. 44: 4.) God promises to pour out His Spirit upon such well kept families as rain upon flower-gardens. ¶ *To do justice, etc.* His household should be trained so as to avoid the doom of the guilty cities — and so as to make Abraham, through his descendants, a blessing to all mankind. ¶ *That the Lord may bring.* This condition of things — the household piety, will fully vindicate the distinction which God will make between Abraham's family and posterity, and those of the wicked population of Sodom. And it is here stated, as if this domestic fidelity and piety were a condition of things indispensable to the execution of God's gracious plan. (1.) "The secret of the Lord is with them that fear Him, and He will show them His covenant." Ps. 25: 11. (2.) God dispenses His covenant blessings in the line of the covenant seed. (3.) How precious is this heritage for our children. (4.) How cruel is the parental impenitence which neglects so great salvation for the household. (5.) Faithful parents may hope even against hope for the covenant blessing on their children — for our trust is not in them but in God.

20. *And* — Jehovah said, etc. The Covenant Angel proceeds now to unfold to Abraham his intent. ¶ *The cry.* (vs. 13.) The sins are so open and outright that they seem to have a voice like Cain's, Ch. 4; 10,—like

21 ^a I will go down now, and see whether they have done altogether according to the cry of it, which is come unto me; and if not, ^b I will know.

22 And the men turned their faces from thence, ^c and went toward Sodom; but Abraham ^d stood yet before the LORD.

23 ¶ And Abraham ^e drew near, and said, ^f Wilt thou also destroy the righteous with the wicked?

^a ch. 11: 5. ^b Deut. 8: 2, and 13: 3; Josh. 22: 22; Luke 16: 15; 2 Cor. 11: 11. ^c ch. 19: 1. ^d ver. 1. ^e Heb. 10: 22. ^f Numb. 16: 22; 2 Sam. 24: 17

that of the oppressed reapers, James 5: 4. The *cry* was the loud call for punishment. Some sins are more heinous than others, and such as strike at the very foundations of social order and purity and safety make a strong appeal to God for vengeance. They are "open beforehand going before to judgment." *The cry of Sodom and Gomorrah because it is great, and their sin because it is grievous exceedingly.*

21. *I will go down.* Here the purpose of the Covenant Angel is stated to go down to Sodom and inquire into the facts. It is a descent to the plain of the Dead Sea. This is speaking of God after the manner of men; but Jehovah was here in the garb of a man, and the language is therefore appropriate. (See vs. 16.) It implies simply that He was intent on just judgment—not swift but slow to anger, and only visiting iniquity when it was fully proven. He went down. (See vs. 35.) ¶ *Whether they have done altogether.* Heb.—*Whether they have made completeness*—made a finish (of their sins)—filled the measure. "Sin when it is finished bringeth forth death." (Jas. 1: 15.) ¶ *I will know.* Onk.—"But if they repent I will not take vengeance." Sam. Vers.—"I will repay." Greek. Vulg. Germ.—*Or if not, that I may know.* There is strict justice in all God's judgments. None are punished without ample cause.

22. *The men.* It is plain from ch. 19: 1, that here the *two men* who attended upon the Covenant Angel, proceeded towards Sodom whilst Abraham detained this chief personage, the Lord (Jehovah) by his intercession for the doomed cities. ¶ *Stood yet.* Heb. and Gr.—*Was standing yet.* Onk.—*Stood in prayer before the Lord.* From vs. 16 it would seem that they had risen to go, and had started, and Abraham with them, when the Lord raised the question in vs. 17.

23. Abraham here employs the language of a free-born son with his heavenly Father. ¶ *Drew near.* He "came boldly"—Heb. 10: 22. ¶ *Wilt thou also.* Here the appeal is made simply to the Divine justice—on the principle of the Divine administration well established and known. It is not a personal plea for Lot—nor is it an appeal to the Divine grace here so much as in vs. 24. Here he appeals to the Divine sovereignty, that will execute justice in the earth, (vs. 25.) God surely will make distinction between the righteous and the wicked. (Ps. 5; Mal. 3.) ¶ *The righteous, etc.* Heb.—*A righteous man with a wicked one.* See Numb. 16: 19–22; Ps. 11: 4–7. Judgments do often come upon a whole community for the sins of a portion, because the separation cannot always be made here, and the final adjustment remains for the *great day of account.*

24 ^g Peradventure there be fifty righteous within the city: wilt thou also destroy and not spare the place for the fifty righteous that *are* therein?

25 That be far from thee to do after this manner, to slay the righteous with the wicked; and ^h that the righteous should be as the wicked, that be far from thee: ⁱ Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?

26 And the LORD said, ^k If I find in Sodom fifty righteous within the city, then I will spare all the place for their sakes.

27 And Abraham answered and said, ^l Behold now, I have taken upon me to speak unto the LORD, which *am* ^m but dust and ashes:

28 Peradventure there shall lack five of the fifty righteous:

^g Jer. 5: 1. ^h Job 8: 20; Isai. 3: 10, 11. ⁱ Job 8: 3, and 34: 17; Ps. 58: 11, and 94: 2; Rom. 3: 6. ^k Jer. 5: 1; Ezek. 22: 30. ^l Luke 18: 1. ^m ch. 3: 19; Job 4: 19; Eccles. 12: 7; 1 Cor. 15: 47, 48; 2 Cor. 5: 1.

24. The appeal is now that the wicked city may be spared on account of the righteous few. ¶ *Fifty.* God often spares a community for the sake of a few good men in it. And here the principle is conceded by the Lord. At first the suppliant patriarch names *fifty* as the number who may save Sodom from destruction. He could hope there might be found so many as this. He does not now merely deprecate the destruction of the righteous, as though he were indifferent to the doom of the unconverted. Nay, but he pleads for them. It is sad enough that God's judgments, war, pestilence, famine, should sweep away the righteous as they are mixed in communities with the wicked. But alas for the souls of the sinners who must perish eternally! Abraham therefore pleads that *the place*—wicked as it is—even guilty Sodom—may be spared for the sake of fifty righteous who may peradventure be found there. God's moral government in the world proceeds upon this plan of preserving the earth for the sake of the church that is in it. ¶ *Spare.* Heb. נָשָׂא means to *take away* or *bear* (sin) and so, *forbear, spare or forgive.*

25. *That be far, etc.* Heb. הָרָחֵק לָךְ

shocking (abominable) *to thee, from doing, etc.* Gr. μηδαμῶς, *by no means.* This is the language not of complaint, nor of indignant remonstrance—nothing of this sort—but of tender entreaty and of loving persuasion. “I know you will not do unjustly.” ¶ *Shall not.* Heb.—*Shall the judge of all the earth not do (right) judgment?*

26. The answer here given by the Lord reveals His kind readiness to hear and answer prayer. He grants the full measure of Abraham's request. This readiness is the patriarch's encouragement to ask more.

27, 28. He advances upon the former petition—not in the spirit of dictation, nor of rebellion against God; but of true humiliation. “*Dust and ashes*” is all that he claims to be. “*Dust* in his origin, *ashes* in his end.” He will name *five* less for the requisite number; fearing that possibly the salvation might fail by the number falling short of fifty. How he puts the plea! *For lack of five!* Not naming forty-five, but making it as though when God had conceded so much, that now to refuse for *lack of five*, would be quite inconceivable. The answer is equally favorable.

28. He ventures now to name an-

wilt thou destroy all the city for *lack of* five? And he said, If I find there forty and five, I will not destroy *it*.

29 And he spake unto him yet again, and said, Peradventure there shall be forty found there. And he said, I will not do *it* for forty's sake.

30 And he said *unto him*, Oh, let not the LORD be angry, and I will speak: Peradventure there shall thirty be found there. And he said, I will not do *it*, if I find thirty there.

31 And he said, Behold now, I have taken upon me to speak unto the LORD: Peradventure there shall be twenty found there. And he said, I will not destroy *it* for twenty's sake.

32 And he said, "Oh, let not the LORD be angry, and I will speak yet but this once: Peradventure ten shall be found there. ° And he said, I will not destroy *it* for ten's sake.

33 And the LORD went his way, as soon as he had left communing with Abraham: and Abraham returned unto his place.

n Judg. 6: 39.

o James 5: 16.

other five less, and gets a like favorable response.

29. *Forty*. It is now a still further advance upon the Divine compassion. And so God's grace already experienced is made the incentive to still further drafts upon it.

30. Now the step is still a bolder one. He now ventures upon reducing the number by *ten* instead of by *five*, and he begs that this repeated and enlarged petition may not provoke the Lord to anger.

31. He now again advances by *ten*, and pleads for *twenty's* sake.

32. *Yet but this once*. Heb.—*Only this (one) time (more)*. (Ex. 10: 17.) He makes another and final advance in his plea. It is now for *ten's* sake. And he receives the same prompt and favoring response. Why should not the successful pleader—the friend of God, who had not yet been at all denied—go on and still further plead for *five's* sake? He is satisfied to rest his petition there. He is satisfied with this exhibition of the Divine favor, and is willing to trust the result with God, who has clearly shown His willingness to save,

so that now he cannot doubt that Sodom will be spared if it be possible. Peradventure, also, the case may be such as to forbid the Divine clemency to go further. (See Ezek. 14: 14; Jer. 15: 1.) He will not press God to a denial, nor limit His sovereignty, nor press him thus to the smallest figure. Here he can rest the cause and trust. "This seemingly commercial kind of entreaty," says *Delitsch*, "is the essence of true prayer. It is the shamelessness of faith, which bridges over the infinite distance of the creature from the Creator, and appeals with importunity to the heart of God, not ceasing till the point is gained." Yet we may go beyond all proper bound to require a positive limitation of God's freedom, or to demand that He commit Himself to the smallest possible figure in such cases, as if we could not rest the issue in His hands even for the last fraction, but must bind him to us else we cannot rest.

33. *Went his way*. As He had declared (vs. 21) to go down to Sodom as one of the *three* who had come to Abraham. (1.) God

CHAPTER XIX.

AND there ^a came two angels to Sodom at even; and Lot sat in the gate of Sodom; and ^b Lot seeing *them*, rose up to meet them; and bowed himself with his face toward the ground;

a ch. 18: 22.

b ch. 18: 1, &c.

granted Abraham's prayer so far as he ventured to extend it. All the way from fifty to ten He answered, "Yes; I will spare for the number that you name." We know not what would have been the answer had he gone further. He may have had some intimation that he should proceed no further (Jer. 7: 16; 11: 14), or by the Covenant Angel going His way. But (1.) We have here the highest encouragement for intercessory prayer,—to plead with God for wicked men, for communities and nations that are far gone in sin. Guilty cities and nations have been spared on account of God's people. (Matt. 5: 13; 24: 22) Abraham received no denial. So far as we can see, it was he who left off and not God. Yet (2.) We are to rest humbly and trustfully upon God's good pleasure after all our prayer. It would seem that there were not even so many as ten righteous in Sodom. Probably there was only one, and he might justly have been left to perish. (Eccl. 9: 2.) And yet God went even further than His promise, and saved Lot's family, which contained doubtless all the righteous who were there. Thus He granted Abraham's prayer. He would not destroy the righteous with the wicked. (3.) God loves to be pleaded with and importuned in prayer. (4.) The righteous are the salt of the earth. The world is preserved in being for the church's sake. The history of the world is the history of redemption. (5.) We have still higher encouragement to pray and plead for the ONE RIGHT-

EOUS' sake,—JESUS. Six times he, Abraham, urged his prayer, with a steady advance, and each time made God's gracious answer the encouragement to ask yet more. And there he rested in a serene, Sabbatic confidence in God, that He would do all things right and well. "Not my will but thine be done." (6.) What a blessing to have the prayers of a saint for us.

CHAPTER XIX.

§ 40. THE TWO ANGELS APPEAR TO LOT. DESTRUCTION OF SODOM. LOT'S FLIGHT TO ZOAR.

Two of the three angelic Beings arrived at Sodom in the evening—the Covenant Angel being detained as yet with Abraham. They were urged by Lot to accept his hospitality. The vile people of Sodom demanded the strangers to be given up to them for their corrupt indulgence. This disclosed the base immorality of the place, and the angels struck them with blindness; and then announced to Lot the destruction to which Sodom was doomed, and urged him and his family to leave the city. The ruin came. Lot escaped with his wife and two daughters; but his wife disobeying the command, and looking back, was turned into a pillar of salt, and the daughters were guilty of gross corruption, which showed the bad influence of the society of Sodom.

1. *Two angels.* Heb.—*Two of the angels.* The third of these three who had appeared to Abraham in

2 And he said, Behold now, my lords, ^c turn in, I pray you, into your servant's house, and tarry all night, and ^d wash your feet, and ye shall rise up early, and go on your ways. And they said, ^e Nay; but we will abide in the street all night.

3 And he pressed upon them greatly; and they turned in unto

c Heb. 13: 2. d ch. 18: 4. e Luke 24: 28.

angelic form was held by him in his pleadings for Sodom, while the two went forward. (Ch. 18: 22. See also ch. 18: 33, and ch. 19: 24.) ¶ *Sat in the gate.* In Oriental cities the gate, that is the open space around and inside the city gate, was the place for public gatherings, for the market, and for the judges to sit in court. Job 27: 7-12. This phrase, therefore, may mean that Lot was sitting as a magistrate, though from vs. 9, as *Bush* remarks, it would seem that Lot was "too good a man to have been a popular magistrate." This notice in vs. 9 means, he *continually acteth the judge*, and may refer to the fact of his frequent reproof of them which had become so unpopular. (See *Notes*.) At least it was the place for public resort, for news and business. (See ch. 34: 20; Deut. 21: 19; 22: 15.) We can see how Lot came to be there, while we know that God arranges all events and incidents so as to suit His purposes. ¶ *Rose—bowed*, etc. This is the Oriental custom to rise in the presence of superiors, and to bow low with the face to the ground in token of homage. The Heb. term is used of an act of worship, (ch. 22: 5; 1 Sam. 1: 3,) and also of respectful salutation paid to kings and princes and also to equals. (Ch. 42: 6; 48: 12; 23: 7; 37: 7, 9 10.) The salutation is that of falling on the knees, and touching the forehead to the ground. "Lot at even, ere he retired to rest, remained on the look-out for those who might need his hospitality."—*Candlish*.

2. *My lords.* This is in the plural,

and the term is one of respect and courtesy such as is addressed to men, (ch. 31: 35.) It would seem that though at first the Covenant Angel was not with them (vs. 13), He afterwards joined them, and Lot addresses Him by the term "Lord" (Jehovah), as the Divine Being—the Angel of the Covenant (vs. 18.) ¶ *Turn in.* *Turn aside to the house of your servant and lodge*, (pass the night,) etc. Lot was "not forgetful to entertain strangers," and thus he "entertained angels unawares." (Heb. 13: 2.) In the East at present travellers, if they have no tents, often pass the night with the sheikh of the village; else they must lodge in the open air, unless there be a khan or caravanserai, an enclosure with shelter. This we have tried, with little comfort. ¶ *Wash your feet*, etc. These hospitalities are similar to those shown them by Abraham, (ch. 18: 2,) and they belong to Oriental customs of that time which still exist. ¶ *On your ways—on your way.* He promised to give them every facility for journeying on, the next day, supposing them to be passing travellers. ¶ *Nay.* They gracefully decline the proffered hospitality, and propose to lodge in the open square at the gate. The Heb. term *לָחַב* is rendered here, *street*. (But see 2 Chron. 32: 6, comp. Neh. 8: 1, 3, 16.) ¶ *We will abide.* Heb.—*Because (or but) we will lodge in the open square.* This might have seemed to them the better "as they had been sent to inquire into the state of the town."

3. *He pressed upon them.* He

him, and entered into his house; ^fand he made them a feast, and did bake unleavened bread, and they did eat.

4 ¶ But before they lay down, the men of the city, *even* the men of Sodom, compassed the house round, both old and young, all the people from every quarter:

5 ^gAnd they called unto Lot, and said unto him, Where *are* the men which came in to thee this night? ^hbring them out unto us, that we ⁱmay know them.

6 And ^kLot went out at the door unto them, and shut the door after him,

7 And said, I pray you, brethren, do not so wickedly.

8 ^lBehold, now, I have two daughters which have not known

f ch. 18 : 8. g Isai. 3 : 9 h Judg. 19 : 22. i ch. 4 : 1 ; Rom. 1 : 24 : 27 ; Jude 7. k Judg. 19 : 23. l Judg. 19 : 24.

urged upon them exceedingly. The same phrase is found in vs. 9, where it is well rendered "*They pressed sore upon the man.*" The word means originally, to *beat*—to use violence, and thus is meant to be expressed the extreme urgency. ¶ *A feast*—Heb. *a banquet*. It was a refreshment, whether called an eating or a drinking. In Esther 5 : 6-7 it is rendered a banquet of wine. This was Lot's generous entertainment—the best at his command, doubtless.

¶ *Unleavened bread*. This was baked most immediately and without the preparation required for fermented bread. OBSERVE.—It would seem from vs. 8 that they were urged to sojourn with Lot, for fear of the mad passions of the Sodomites.

4. Here occurs the shocking display of the Sodomites' iniquity, such as had made their city the mark for Divine vengeance, and called for their destruction. ¶ *Both old and young*. This is the monstrous, shameful pitch to which they had come in their wickedness—that all ages and classes had become most corrupt—the young as well as the old. When the youth of a city are so abandoned to open and public vice, then the swift vengeance of God may be expected to sweep away

the base population. The crime has a name in the Scriptures which is borrowed from this infamous place, (Lev. 18 : 22 ; 20 : 13.) It was very prevalent among the Canaanites, and according to Rom. 1 : 22, a curse of heathenism generally even in the best days of Rome. Calvin understands that the demand was merely to bring the strangers that they might know who they were ; but that this was only a disguise of their shameful designs.

5. *Called unto Lot*. They called aloud in a clamorous tone—defiant and threatening—demanding the men (the angels, in human form.)

6. *At the door*—properly the doorway (opening)—and he shut the door after him—that is the door itself which he opened and shut behind him. The words are different, the former denoting the entrance or passage-way—and the latter the door which swings on hinges, or turns in sockets and closes the passage. He shut the door to protect his guests.

7. *So wickedly*. Heb.—*Do not, I pray you, my brethren, do wickedly.*

8. The fact that these guests had come under Lot's roof at his urgency makes him all the more deeply anxious to protect them. Besides, he

man; let me, I pray you, bring them out unto you, and do ye to them as *is* good in your eyes; only unto these men do nothing; ^m for therefore came they under the shadow of my roof.

9 And they said, Stand back. And they said *again*, This one *fellow* ⁿ came in to sojourn, ^o and he will needs be a judge: now will we deal worse with thee than with them. And they pressed sore upon the man, *even* Lot, and came near to break the door.

10 But the men put forth their hand, and pulled Lot into the house to them, and shut to the door.

m ch. 18: 5. n 2 Pet. 2: 7, 8. o Exod. 2: 14.

may already have seen that they were heavenly visitants. Yet we are shocked at his expedient for their safety to expose his own daughters. Could he have seriously meant to do this? Or was it only as much as to say, I had sooner give up to you my own daughters than these men, who are my sacred guests? Did he only seek thus to divert their attention? Or was he well-nigh distracted with his alarm and perplexity? Or, did he trust the presence and influence of his sons in law with the crowd (vs. 14) to prevent such a shameful proceeding as he suggests? "In his anxiety, Lot was willing to sacrifice to the sanctity of hospitality his duty as a father, which ought to have been still more sacred, and committed the sin of seeking to avert sin by sin. Even if he judged that his daughters would suffer no harm, as they were betrothed to Sodomites, yet the offer was a grievous violation of paternal duty."—*K. & D.* See *Bush*. He should have done right and trusted in God. ¶ *Under my roof*. Heb.—*Therefore came they under the shadow of my beams* (or rafters.) It was for this very purpose of security that they entered Lot's house; and upon his virtual pledge of safety—perhaps an express guaranty. OBSERVE.—Lot had not lived in Sodom without suffering in his moral sentiments. The corrupting influence of society is powerful.

"Evil communications corrupt good manners" (1 Cor. 15: 33). Lot had stoutly opposed their base practices, but had felt the evil effects in his family, else he could never have come to look upon his daughters in such a light. (2 Pet. 2: 7, 8.)

9. *Stand back—make way there*. (Isa. 49: 20.) The word means also, *Come hither*. Such terms are used without accuracy in all languages, to call attention or give warning. They now vent their spite upon Lot, that he should seek to baffle their foul designs. ¶ *This one*. Our version supplies the term "*fellow*," because the tone is that of contempt. Heb.—*the one*. ¶ *Came in to sojourn*, and *he will needs be a judge*. Heb.—*He will judge to judge*. "He continually acteth as judge." Gr.—*Thou didst come to sojourn. Was it also to pass judgment?* "The man who came as a foreigner is always wanting to play the judge." (*K. & D.*) It is recorded of Lot in the New Testament that he was greatly and constantly worried and worn down by their gross outrages, and probably he had often rebuked them, (2 Pet. 7: 8.) ¶ *Worse with thee*. They grow threatening and abusive, and rush forward to execute their wrath upon Lot.

10. When they had well-nigh broken through the door,—at the critical moment, as they seemed ready to accomplish their mad designs,—they were smitten by a Di-

11 And they smote the men ^pthat *were* at the door of the house with blindness, both small and great: so that they wearied themselves to find the door.

12 ¶ And the men said unto Lot, Hast thou here any besides? son-in-law, and thy sons, and thy daughters, and whatsoever thou hast in the city, ^abring *them* out of this place:

13 For we will destroy this place, because the ^rcry of them is waxen great before the face of the LORD; and ^sthe LORD hath sent us to destroy it.

14 And Lot went out, and spake unto his sons-in-law, ^twhich

p 2 Kings 6: 18; Acts 18: 11. q ch. 7: 1; 2 Pet. 2: 7, 8. r ch. 18: 20. s 1 Chron. 21: 15. t Matt. 1: 18.

vine power and defeated. "God's people are safe when angels stand sentries at their doors."—*Bush*. How shameful to resort to sinful expedients, as Abraham had done in Egypt, rather than trust fully to God.

11. *Blindness*. Onk.—*Fatuity of sight*. Syr.—*Illusions*. "Mental blindness, in which the eye sees, but does not see the right object." (2 Kings 6: 18.)—*Keil and Delitsch*. "*Blind confusion*."—*Kalisch*. "A punishment for their utter moral blindness, an omen of the coming judgment."—*Keil and Delitsch*. The effect was manifest. ¶ *They wearied themselves* — they groped about (the same verb as is rendered *stand back*, vs. 9) to *find the door*. "It is the use of God to blind and besot those whom he means to destroy."—*Bp. Hall*.

12. The angels had now manifested their Divine commission by summary judgment upon the Sodomite leaders, and at once they give direction to Lot to remove his household out of the place, and formally announce their errand of destruction upon Sodom. "When men are grown to that pass that they are no whit better by afflictions, and worse with admonitions, God finds it time to strike."—*Bp. Hall*. "The awful lesson of God's most tremendous rebukes of unhallowed lustings

is lost upon multitudes who, with their eyes open to the consequences, cease not to press forward to the same destructive career."—*Calvin*.

¶ *Besides*. In addition to those who were with him in the house, who were elsewhere in the doomed city. But some infer from vs. 15 that he had other daughters not "*found*" there. ¶ *Son-in-law*, etc. Any son-in-law. The household is here included. The blessings of God's household covenant are here set forth. Even though some of these were reckless, the privilege is offered to them. And God will show, even in his work of judgment, how desirable it is to belong to a holy house, and what provisions there are for such, if men will but accept them. Lot's sons-in-law rejected the benefit and perished in the destruction of the city. These are they who are supposed to have been betrothed to these daughters at home.

13. *We will destroy*. Heb.—*We are destroying or about to destroy*. ¶ *The cry of them*. This is the language used by Jehovah in ch. 18: 20. ¶ *Waxen great*. Heb.—*Is great* (or is become great) *before Jehovah*—in His presence or in His ear. ¶ *Sent us*. The *Jehovah* who talked with Abraham had sent them to destroy the city; and He Himself appears in the transaction, vs. 18, 24.

married his daughters, and said, ^u Up, ^g get you out of this place; for the LORD will destroy this city. ^x But he seemed as one that mocked unto his sons-in-law.

15 ¶ And when the morning arose, then the angels hastened Lot, saying, ^y Arise, take thy wife, and thy two daughters which are here, lest thou be consumed in the iniquity of the city.

16 And while he lingered, the men laid hold upon his hand,

u Numb. 16: 21, 45. x Ex. 9: 21; Luke 17: 28, and 24: 11. y Numb. 16: 24, 26; Rev. 18: 4.

14. *Lot went out.* "That Lot is willing at this crisis to be still a preacher of righteousness is a further token of the Lord's hand in his deliverance. The faith that could move him to go forth on the errand on which the angels send him was manifestly the gift of God."—*Candlish*. "In inviting his sons-in-law to join him he manifests such diligence as becomes the sons of God, who ought to labor by all means to rescue their own families from destruction."—*Calvin*. ¶ *Which married, etc.* Heb.—*The takers of his daughters, or who were about to take.* So *Josephus, Vulgate, Ewald, and others, as the Gr. and Targum, read who had taken; and they rest upon vs. 15, as if there the reference was to other daughters who were not found, and who were in the city and married.* "If Lot had married daughters, he would undoubtedly have called upon them to escape along with their husbands, his sons-in-law."—*Keil and Delitsch*. ¶ *That mocked.* Heb.—*And he was as a laugh* (or *mock*) *in the eyes of his sons-in-law.* Comp. Luke 28: 29. His words seemed to them as idle tales, and they believed not. "The nearer the vengeance of God approaches, the more does their obstinacy increase and become desperate."—*Calvin*.

15. Lot required to be *hastened—urged*. Indeed his tardiness was such that the angels even threaten him with the possibility of his being involved in the destruction of the city. It was natural that he should still

cleave to his home. ¶ *The morning.* At the day-dawn; for the sun did not rise till Lot entered Zoar. ¶ *Which are here.* Heb.—*Which are found.* Chal.—*Which are found faithful with thee.* This is supposed by some to imply that there were other daughters, who were not "*found*" at home, but were married to sons-in-law. But this is already shown to be improbable, (vs. 14.) ¶ *In the iniquity.* The Hebrew term signifies either iniquity or the *punishment* of iniquity. "Not that the Lord casts rashly the innocent on the same heap with the wicked, but that the man who will not consult for his own safety, and who even being warned to beware, yet exposes himself by his sloth to ruin, deserves to perish."—*Calvin*.

NOTE.—They who are chosen to salvation may nevertheless be urged by the danger of perdition (as Heb. 6: 4–6; Acts 27: 21;) for these warnings and alarms are among the sacred means for their deliverance.

16. *While he lingered.* Heb.—*And he delayed (or hindered himself) and the men laid hold on his hand, etc.* This is the loving violence which God employs in the messengers and means of grace to deliver sinners from destruction. ¶ *The Lord being merciful, or in the sparing mercy of Jehovah upon him.* "For so it is often necessary for us to be forcibly drawn away from scenes which we do not willingly leave. If riches or honors prove an obstacle to any one in God's service, and he is abridged of his fortune or fame, let him know

and upon the hand of his wife, and upon the hand of his two daughters; ^athe LORD being merciful unto him; ^band they brought him forth, and set him without the city.

17 ¶ And it came to pass, when they had brought them forth abroad, that he said, ^cEscape for thy life: ^dlook not behind thee, neither stay thou in all the plain: escape to the mountain, lest thou be consumed.

18 And Lot said unto them, Oh, ^enot so my Lord!

19 Behold now, thy servant hath found grace in thy sight, and thou hast magnified thy mercy, which thou hast showed unto me in saving my life: and I cannot escape to the mountain, lest some evil take me, and I die:

20 Behold now, this city *is* near to flee unto, and it is a little

^a Luke 18: 13; Rom. 9: 15, 16. ^b Ps 34: 22. ^c 1 Kings 19: 3. ^d Ver. 26; Matt. 24: 16, 17, 18; Luke 9: 62; Phil. 3: 13, 14. ^e Acts 10: 14.

that the Lord has laid hold of his hand."—*Calvin*. "We are all naturally in Sodom. If God did not pull us out while we linger, we should be condemned with the world."—*Bp. Hall*. "Was it from sorrow at the prospect of losing all his property, or was it that his benevolent heart was paralyzed by thoughts of the awful crisis?"—*Jamieson*.

17. *He said*. Here is a change of person, and we are led to suppose that the one here referred to is no other than Jehovah, the Covenant Angel, who had been detained by the intercession of Abraham. Lot addresses him (vs. 18) as the Lord. He speaks also with authority, (vs. 21,) in the very tone of the Being whom Abraham had pleaded with; and in vs. 24 it is said that "Jehovah rained down fire from Jehovah out of heaven." ¶ *Escape for thy life*. This is a gospel message. The command is now *Be saved*. The command is also an invitation, and implies the highest privilege. "There is no greater love than that which, even at the risk of being vexatious and troublesome, presses on the sinner and says *Escape for thy life*."—*Gerlach*. ¶ *Look not behind thee*. This would divert the attention and

divide the interest, while it would peril the salvation by needless delay. "To look back is a sign of unbelief and of cleaving to sin."—*Gerlach*. ¶ *Neither stay*. There was no time to lose. There was no spot on the whole *plain* or *district* where they might tarry at all. No safe abiding place was to be thought of short of the mountains east of the Jordan, (ch. 14: 10,) for the destruction would sweep over the plain.

18, 19. Here again Lot lacked faith and courage, and instead of falling in implicitly with God's plan, proposes an expedient of his own. He pleads that he may stop short of this mountain, and find refuge in a neighboring city, which, being small and unimportant, might be spared. His plea is based upon God's mercy towards him—His manifest intent of salvation—and on the assumption that he should perish if compelled to flee to the mountain, as if God's plan of salvation could be defeated. ¶ *Lest some evil take me*. Heb.—*The evil*—the destruction forthcoming. He was fearful of being overtaken by the swift judgment which he now saw was coming.

20. *This city*. A small town in the neighborhood that was formerly

one: Oh, let me escape thither! (*is it not a little one?*) and my soul shall live.

21 And he said unto him, See, ^fI have accepted thee concerning this thing also, that I will not overthrow this city, for the which thou hast spoken.

22 Haste thee, escape thither; for ^gI cannot do anything till thou be come thither. ^hTherefore the name of the city was called Zoar.

23 ¶ The sun was risen upon the earth, when Lot entered into Zoar.

^f Job 42: 8, 9; Ps. 145: 19. ^g ch. 32: 25, 26; Ex. 32: 10; Deut. 9: 14; Mark 6: 5. ^h ch. 13: 10, and 14: 2.

called *Bela* but which is thought to have received the name of Zoar (meaning *littleness*) from the plea that Lot here uses, calling it *a little one*, vs. 22. (Ch. 14: 2.) The *Jerus. Targ.* reads "It is little and its sins are little." From vs. 21 we infer that this town was included in the doomed district. "And this verily is the nature of men that they choose to seek their safety in hell itself rather than in heaven, whenever they follow their own reason."—*Calvin*.

21. *Behold.* Heb.—*Lo! now I have lifted up thy face* (accepted thee) *even to this word (thing) for my not destroying the city which thou hast said.* "I take regard of thee in this thing also not to overthrow the city of which thou hast spoken."—*K.* To lift up the face of one in judgment according to the Heb. idiom, is to acquit him—so more generally it is to show favor or to grant one's prayer. "It is no new thing for the Lord sometimes to grant as an indulgence what He does not approve."—*Calvin*.

22. God is pleased to bind Himself by the necessity of saving those whom he has promised to save. "He hath mercy on whom he wills to have mercy," and no human nor Satanic power can possibly hinder. He can do nothing to let loose upon the earth His fiery judgments until the salvation of His people is secured.

¶ *Zoar.* (See vs. 20.) This was probably on the eastern side of the sea.

23. *The sun arose upon the earth, and Lot came unto (near to) Zoar. And Jehovah caused it to rain upon Sodom, etc.* This was the direct act of Jehovah; and the repetition of this idea is meant to show that this rain of fire and brimstone was produced by no natural causes. "Moses here expressly commends to us the extraordinary Word of God in order that we may know that Sodom was not destroyed without a manifest miracle."—*Calvin*. What stronger language could be used? *Jehovah caused it to rain brimstone and fire from Jehovah out of heaven.* "This rain was not a mere storm with lightning setting on fire the soil, already over-charged with naphtha and sulphur." The words are to be understood quite literally as meaning that brimstone and fire (i. e., burning brimstone) fell from the sky."—*Keil and Delitsch*. These cities of the plain are first mentioned in ch. 10: 19; then in ch. 13: 10–13: It is contended by some that the burnt district is at the bottom of the Dead Sea; and by others that it is still visible. But the Scripture references to the land as utterly desolate and waste, may rather refer to the whole plain or district surrounding—as where "the

Vale of Siddim is spoken of as the Salt Sea." (Ch. 14 : 3.) Else we may suppose that where there was formerly this vale, there is now the Salt Sea or Dead Sea. This view is opposed by *Reland*, *De Sauley*, and *Stanley*, who maintain that there is no submergence of the cities by the sea. And this seems to have been the view of the ancients, *Josephus*, *Strabo*, *Tacitus*, etc. *Robinson* and others hold that a lake must have existed there long before, to receive the waters of the Jordan, and that they could not have flowed into the Red Sea, as some had supposed, because the level of the Jordan is much lower than that sea. The Red Sea is about forty feet higher than the Mediterranean, while the Dead Sea is about 1300 feet lower. "There is no evidence of the catastrophe having been a geological one." (*Smith's Bib. Dic.*) It was plainly miraculous, as the clear sense of the language indicates. It is held by *Robinson* (and others as *De Sauley*) that these cities of the plain were located on the southern part of the Dead Sea, and are buried under or around that portion of the waters. (1.) Because the bottom of the Dead Sea consists of two plains, the lower or southern one being only thirteen feet deep, and the upper or northern one being 1300 feet deep. (2.) Because asphaltum is found only in the southern part, and rises there even yet from the bottom. (3.) The location of Zoar, supposed to be at the mouth of the Wady Kerak. (4.) The features of the region show that there could have been no earthquake nor sudden depression of the Jordan valley—for the streams flow into the Jordan, evenly, without any such break down at their mouths. *Kalisch* attempts to account for the catastrophe by volcanic actions. But this is shown to be without ground. If this had been so it would have

been very differently narrated. (5.) The existence of similar names in the southern quarter. (6.) The Salt Mountain found on the south part of the sea. Yet some conclude that the district was at the north of the sea, from ch. 13 : 10-13, where Abram and Lot surveyed it from between Bethel and Ai—and only the north part could be seen from that point. (But see ch. 19 : 27, 28.) The south is well watered, and it is supposed by *Robinson* that the burnt district is now in part occupied by the southern bay lying south of the peninsula, that the surface of the plain was depressed, or the bottom of the lake heaved up so as to cause the waters to overflow and cover permanently a larger surface than formerly. (See vol. 2, p. 188-9.) But to this it is replied by others, (1.) that the "Plain of the Jordan" occupied by these cities could scarcely have been at the south of the lake; and (2.) that there is no such appearance of any geological disturbance for depressing the lower part of the lake, but rather of a gradual process of filling up the basin by the washings of the streams. (*See Smith's Bib. Dic.* "SODOM.") *Kurtz* thinks that such depression of the southern land so as to become the bed of the lake must have occurred since the destruction of the cities. It seems, therefore, quite impossible to speak with certainty of the location. But we incline to the commonly received view that the southern locality is the more probable, whether under or around the lower part of the sea. We visited the northern portion. Coming down from the ford of the Jordan, we rode our horses up to the shallow edge at the north of the lake, and were amazed to find it clear and inviting, with a pebbly bed visible for some feet out, towards a small island. My horse being very thirsty attempted to drink, when an Arab guide

seized the bridle with a yell of alarm, lest the animal should take the fatal draught. The heat of this desolate basin was most stifling, the level being about one thousand and three hundred feet below Jerusalem.

A party of royal engineers, under the command of Captain *Wilson*, set out in September, 1864, to make a survey of Jerusalem, and to "level" the country from the coast to that city, and thence to the Dead Sea valley. The levelling from the Mediterranean to the Dead Sea has been performed with different instruments by independent observers, and with such nicety that the result can be relied on to within three or four inches. Meanwhile bench-marks have been cut upon rocks and buildings along the line followed, and traverse surveys have been made, so that the work done may become the basis of more extended geodesical examinations of the interesting country toward which Christendom is turning with new and serious interest. The issue of these careful observations is to show that on the 12th of March, 1865, the Dead Sea lay one thousand two hundred and ninety-two feet below the Mediterranean level; which, if it proves that our old estimate was slightly in excess, singularly confirms the calculations by barometer of the *Duc de Luynes* and Lieutenant *Vignes*, who set it at one thousand two hundred and eighty-six feet on the 7th of June, 1864. At this season of the winter freshets, the waters of this strange secluded lake stand two or three feet higher, and in the fiercest heats of summer they are again lowered six feet by evaporation. Thus the greatest depression of the Dead Sea is now fixed at one thousand two hundred and ninety-eight feet; and as we know that Lieutenant *Lynch* found a depth of one thousand three hundred and eight feet opposite the Wady Zerka-

Maia, we are now sure that the bottom lies some two thousand six hundred feet below the coast at Jaffa. We saw birds skimming close to the waters, and here and there we picked up chunks of bitumen and of pure sulphur near the shore. No bush grows but the thorn-bush, and the whole plain around the north is dreary and almost devoid of vegetation. We bathed in the waters, and found it true, as stated, that one rolls like a tub in the briny flood, without sinking, and that the acrid water is skinning to the tongue, and irritating to the surface, smarting intensely at every scratch or pimple, while the feeling, besides, is that of a greasy sediment. We had filled our skin bottles with water from the Jordan to wash off this unpleasant bath, but they had been filled too full and they had broken on the passage.

The effects of the Divine visitation upon the cities of the plain are frequently referred to in the Scriptures. (Deut. 29 : 22; Jer. 17 : 5, 6; Zeph. 2 : 9.) *Tacitus* and *Strabo* also refer to the current belief that such a catastrophe did occur, and by special Divine agency. *Bush* inclines to explain away the supernatural and refer it to a mere volcanic eruption or to a stroke of lightning, ("brimstone and fire," meaning flaming brimstone or lightning,) which set on fire the bitumen of the soil. But this would be a wide departure from the plain sense of the narrative, at least to suppose that this was the whole of it. (See also Luke 17 : 29; 2 Pet. 2 : 6; Judges 7.) *Chateaubriand* says: "I adhere to the account given in the Scripture without summoning physics to my aid." *Kitto* is led by *Lynch's Researches* to hold "that the channel of the Jordan through this plain, with the plain itself through which it flowed, sank down leaving the ancient bed of the river still distinguishable, and forming thus a deep

24 Then ⁱthe LORD rained upon Sodom and upon Gomorrah brimstone and fire from the LORD out of heaven ;

25 And he overthrew those cities, and all the plain, and all the inhabitants of the cities, and ^kthat which grew upon the ground.

26 ¶ But his wife looked back from behind him, and she became ^la pillar of salt.

i Deut. 29 : 23 ; Is. 13 : 19 ; Jer. 20 : 16, and 50 : 40 ; Ezek. 16 : 49, 50 ; Hos. 11 : 8 ; Amos 4 : 11 ; Zeph. 2 : 9 ; Luke 17 : 29 ; 2 Pet. 2 : 6 ; Jude 7. k ch. 14 : 3 ; Ps. 107 : 34 ; l Luke 17 : 32.

basin for the waters which formerly passed onward through the plain."

25. *And he overthrew—those cities and the whole plain, and all the inhabitants of the cities and the produce of the ground.* It is by some understood hence, that by this miraculous visitation "the soil itself which abounded in asphaltum, was set on fire, so that the entire valley was burned out and sank, or was overthrown (הִפָּתָה) and the Dead Sea took its place."—*Keil and Delitzsch*.

But the term here for "*produce*" (צִמְחָה), means *sprouting, shooting, as of plants*. We found hot springs at Tiberias at the head of the Jordan Valley, and they are also found at the foot of the Dead Sea. ¶ *Those cities*. Besides Sodom and Gomorrah, which are chiefly named, were the cities of Admah and Zeboim, (Deut 29 : 23, comp. Hos. 11 : 8,) and all in the Valley of Siddim, Zoar alone being exempted. The present area of the Dead Sea is about forty-five miles by eight. It is skirted on the east by mountains, and on the west towards Jerusalem, the plain sweeps, for some considerable breadth, towards the bare, bleak hill-sides. On the south part of the lake is the peninsular called *Lisan*, or *the tongue*, about twenty miles from the southern extremity. Along these lower shores is the famous Salt Hill, called by the name of "Usdum" (Sodom.) The bed of this portion of the lake is a soft bituminous mud, into whose mire the cities may have been sunk and buried out of sight forever. Doubt-

less natural agencies were employed—the lightning, with the extraordinary pouring down of fiery torrents, and possibly also the volcanic eruption, or burning of the bituminous soil by fires let loose from above, and belching out so as to rain down upon the plain. But, if so, there was a miraculous ordering of all these agencies and only the greater display of God's supernatural control of all the elements and of all natural forces. Ps. 11 : 6 alludes to this event. "Upon the wicked he will (cause it to) rain snares, fire and brimstone, and a horrible tempest, the portion of their cup." This scene is only a dim and distant hint of the fiery deluge which is to overflow the wicked world at the last day. These cities are set forth for an example suffering the vengeance of eternal fire—destroyed with the eternal destruction that awaits the obstinate sinner. Jude 7.

26. The unbelieving conduct of Lot's wife is here brought to view. She *looked back from behind him*. Gr.—*Unto the things behind*. Heb.—*From after him*—i. e., *from (following) after him*. She, instead of pressing forward with a steady aim in the way that Lot was leading, vacillated and plainly did more than cast her eye backward. She disobeyed the command, (vs. 17,) and looked back in the sense of *tarrying* (standing still) on the plain. It was probably out of a lack of faith in God, and from a heart yet lingering in Sodom. This being so, we can

27 ¶ And Abraham gat up early in the morning to the place where ^m he stood before the LORD :

28 And he looked toward Sodom and Gōmorrah, and toward all the land of the plain, and beheld, and lo, ⁿ the smoke of the country went up as the smoke of a furnace.

29 ¶ And it came to pass, when God destroyed the cities of the plain, that God ^o remembered Abraham, and sent Lot out of the

m ch. 18 : 22. n Rev. 18 : 9. o ch. 8 : 1, and 18 : 23.

see how she was enveloped in the total destruction, and encrusted in the salt which settled upon every object, as to this day remains the case, in a less degree. Heb.—*And she was a (statue or) column of salt.* This language does not express a metamorphose. It is not “*she became,*” or *was changed to* a pillar of salt; though this could easily have been, if God so pleased. (See Luke 17 : 31, 32.) “The dashing spray of the salt sulphureous rain seems to have suffocated her, and then encrusted her whole body. She is a memorable example of the indignation and wrath that overtakes the halting and back-sliding.”—*Murphy*. So *Bush*. Columns of salt are found around the southern shores of the lake, which have been associated with this event. But this is part of the special Divine transaction, for the signaling of His judgment upon the wicked, and carries the features of miracle, whatever natural agencies may have been employed. The miracle would consist in this supernatural control of the elements for the purpose specified. *Lynch's* expedition discovered on the east of Usdum a pillar of massive salt cylindrical in front, about forty feet high, resting upon an oval pedestal from forty to sixty feet above the sea-level. *Josephus* refers, probably, to this pillar. *Kurtz* supposes that “the place where she had been left was converted into a heap of salt.” But it is plain that she was made a signal monument of God's

judgment, and the literal sense is not un-supposable—that the elements of this fearful destruction fixed her to the spot. What a fearful warning against all self-secure and presumptuous sinners! What a caution against delay! “Almost saved, lost after all.” Jesus himself pointed to this sad case for a beacon to all such : “*Remember Lot's wife.*” *Kitt* refers to the testimony of *Aventinus* that in Carinthia about fifty people with their cows were destroyed by suffocating vapors of salt after the earthquake of 1348, and were by this means reduced to statues or pillars of salt.

27. Here, again, Abraham comes into view in the narrative. It was day-break when Lot came to Zoar. And about the same time Abraham, who was in Mamre, near Hebron, went to the place where he had interceded with the Covenant Angel for Sodom. This point, as we observed on the spot, commands a view of that region from the heights of Hebron. With what throbbing emotion must he have gone thither to see the result of that eventful interval since the angels left on their way to Sodom. ¶ *The smoke.* Gr.—*Lo a flame rose from the earth like the vapor of a furnace.* This was from the smouldering ruins of the cities and of the whole district—made more fierce by the bituminous sediment. How awful must this sight have been to Abraham.

29. This record is here made to exhibit God's fidelity to the praying

midst of the overthrow, when he overthrew the cities in the which Lot dwelt.

30 ¶ And Lot went up out of Zoar, and ^pdwelt in the mountain, and his two daughters with him; for he feared to dwell in Zoar: and he dwelt in a cave, he and his two daughters.

31 And the first-born said unto the younger, Our father *is* old, and *there is* not a man in the earth ^a to come in unto us after the manner of all the earth:

32 Come, let us make our father drink wine, and we will lie with him, that we ^r may preserve seed of our father.

p ver. 17, 19. q ch. 16: 2, 4; ch. 38: 8, 9; Deut. 25: 5. r Mark 12: 19.

patriarch, His friend—that for his sake he remembered Lot, his relative, though Abraham had not confined his intercessions to the case of Lot. God remembers the households of His people, and often blesses the children for the parents' sake, and even remote branches of the family for the love he bears to the head. ¶ *God remembered.* . . “This rescue is attributed to Elohim, and not to ‘Jehovah,’ the Covenant God, because Lot was severed from His guidance and care on his separation from Abraham. The fact, however, is repeated here for the purpose of connecting it with an event in the life of Lot of great significance to the future history of Abraham’s seed.”—*Keil and Delitzsch.*

30. Here is recorded another glaring vacillation and inconsistency of Lot—that though he had pleaded for Zoar as a refuge, and it had been granted him, he now chooses after all to go to *the mountain* whither he had been ordered at first. He is thus made to repent his own independent counsels, and to fall in with God’s plan as the best for him. ¶ *He feared.* Probably he was afraid that the destruction that so swept the plain might also come upon Zoar; and this the more, as we may suppose, when he saw the same heinous wickedness abounding there as at Sodom. No wonder if the awe of such a scene—the loss of his wife and sons-in-law,

and the smoking, flaming ruins around him,—drove him to seek refuge in a cavern of the mountains for himself and his daughters, though God had assured him that he should be safe in Zoar. Unbelief suffers a dreadful penalty when, at last, it can believe nothing. ¶ *Cave.* Caves abound in the limestone rocks of Palestine. At Bethlehem such a cave was used as an *inn*, or caravanserai. And *Jerome* is said to have lived in one of the adjoining caves of the same ridge. We entered them, and saw others nearly adjacent where animals were stabled. The Horites dwell in caves; and in summer heats these were grateful resorts. The *Heb.* reads—“*In the cave*”—one of the caves.

31. Strange that these who were so lately and signally delivered by God should at once set themselves to do evil. This shows the shocking corruptions of Sodom cleaving to them, notwithstanding their pious parentage. Their plea was that they were outcast from society, and cut off from all, “as the only survivors of a country smitten by the curse of God.” “Their conduct was worthy of Sodom, and shows, as much as their previous betrothal to men of Sodom, that they were deeply imbued with the sinful character of that city.”—*Keil and Delitzsch.* OBSERVE.—Here again we trace the ancestry of Ham in the Canaanites of Sodom.

33 And they made their father drink wine that night: and the first-born went in and lay with her father; and he perceived not when she lay down, nor when she arose.

34 And it came to pass on the morrow, that the first-born said unto the younger, Behold, I lay yesternight with my father: let us make him drink wine this night also; and go thou in, *and* lie with him, that we may preserve seed of our father.

35 And they made their father drink wine that night also: and the younger arose, and lay with him; and he perceived not when she lay down, nor when she arose.

36 Thus were both the daughters of Lot with child by their father.

37 And the first-born bare a son, and called his name Moab: ^s the same *is* the father of the Moabites unto this day.

38 And the younger, she also bare a son, and called his name Ben-ammi: ^t the same *is* the father of the children of Ammon unto this day.

s Deut. 2: 9. t Deut. 2: 19.

33-36. *Perceived not when.* Heb.—*In her lying down and in her rising up.* That is, he did not recognize her in his intoxication. This is repeated in vs. 35, in extenuation of Lot's conduct, that he did not know what he was doing.

37. *Moab*, meaning *From the father*. The *Sept.* adds a clause—"Saying of my father;" and to the other name, *Ben Ammi*, they add "Saying the son of my people." This was a bad progeny. Their descendants were afterwards the bitter enemies of the Israelites, who were not allowed to meddle with them on their passage to Canaan. They were excluded also from the congregation of the Lord (Numb. 25: 1; Deut. 23: 3-5) because of their unbrotherly conduct towards Israel. This account is no invention of any national hatred against these tribes as sceptics would imagine. There was no such national hatred. (See Deut. 2: 9, 19.) (1.) We learn that the Covenant God will punish the wicked. (2.) That He will save the good. (3.) That He will spare whole communities for a season for the sake of

the righteous who are in them; and especially at the prayers of His people. (4.) That this salvation is urgently pressed upon us in all our backwardness and unbelief. (5.) That personal exertion is necessary. (2 Pet. 3: 4.) (6.) That some are almost saved, and lost after all. (7.) That they who have been wondrously rescued from temporal destructions may shamefully fall into sin. (8.) That the depth of human depravity is awful. (9.) God remembers human intercessions—how much more those of the God-man. (10.) The Scripture is true and faithful, not concealing the sins of God's people. (11.) Strong drink is the source of untold debasement and degradation and a fountain of iniquity and social crime. (12.) "The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptation." Lot is never again introduced into the history. Separated outwardly and inwardly from Abraham he was of no further importance in the history of salvation so that even his death is not referred to. His descendants, however, are here noted, that we may the better appreciate

CHAPTER XX.

AND Abraham journeyed from ^athence toward the south country, and dwelled between ^bKadesh and Shur, and ^csojourned in Gerar.

2 And Abraham said of Sarah his wife, ^aShe is my sister : And Abimelech king of Gerar sent and ^etook Sarah.

3 But ^fGod came to Abimelech ^gin a dream by night, and said

a ch. 18 : 1. b ch. 16 : 7, 14. c ch. 26 : 6. d ch. 12 : 13, and 26 : 7. e ch. 12 : 15. f Ps. 105 : 14. g Job 33 : 15, 16.

their conduct towards Israel.”—*Keil and Delitzsch*. (13.) The contrast is here drawn between Lot and Abraham—between one who is too much a lover of the world, and one who is the friend of God. (14.) Behold the goodness and severity of God. Upon Sodom and Lot’s wife, severity ; upon Lot and his children, goodness.

CHAPTER XX.

§ 41. ABIMELECH AND SARAH AT GERAR.

1. We find Abraham now journeying southward to the border. Whether it was in search of pasturage, or more likely in order to get out of the doomed district, he removed to the south-east, and abode in the Philistine territory, at Gerar, in the kingdom of Abimelech. He would at least be so saddened at the recent sight as to wish for a new location. He falls into difficulty (as before in Egypt) about Sarah, to his own shame ; but the Lord is good to him, and he is delivered. ¶ *Kadesh and Shur* were border towns, and *between* these, he dwelt in his nomadic life of a shepherd ; and he sojourned, for a temporary abode in *Gerar*, which was the chief city of the Philistines, about eight miles south-south-east of Gaza, where a ruined town is yet found, called *Khirbet el Gerar*. The country was rich pasture land and well-watered.

2. As before, when he went to Egypt, he distrusted the people so much as to represent that Sarah was not his wife, but his sister ; and this wicked expedient of unbelief brought him again into trouble. The lesson he had formerly learned should have kept him from repeating the sin, and now it was so much aggravated.

¶ *Abimelech*. This was the royal title of the Kings of Gerar,—King, the father of the King,—and refers to the royal line and prerogative. The name means *further of the king*—a high name. That he “sent and took Sarah may be supposed to have been not so much from the charm of her beauty at ninety years of age—though it may have been preserved beyond her years—as “to form an alliance with Abraham, the rich nomad prince.”—*Delitzsch*. It would seem that Abraham thought his wife safest if she were regarded as his sister, over whom he would be allowed the control ; and if so, the marriage tie must have been set at nought among that people. But it would appear from vs. 3 that the disclosure to Abimelech of the true relationship alarmed him.

3. The crisis was most serious. The Messiah had been promised to Abraham as the covenant seed, through Sarah, only a short time before this, and God deems it momentous enough to interpose. ¶ *Came—in a dream*. This was anciently a mode of God’s revelation. (Job 33 : 15, 16.) ¶ *Behold*

to him, ^h Behold, thou *art but* a dead man, for the woman which thou hast taken : for she *is* a man's wife.

4 But Abimelech had not come near her : and he said, LORD, ⁱ wilt thou slay also a righteous nation ?

5 Said he not unto me, She *is* my sister ? and she, even she herself said, He *is* my brother : ^k in the integrity of my heart and innocency of my hands have I done this.

6 And God said unto him in a dream, Yea, I know that thou didst this in the integrity of thy heart ; for ^l I also withheld thee from sinning ^m against me : therefore suffered I thee not to touch her.

h ver. 7. i ch. 18 : 23 ; ver. 18. k 2 Kings 20 : 3 ; 2 Cor. 1 : 12. l ch. 31 : 7, and 35 : 5 ; Ex. 34 : 24 ; 1 Sam. 25 : 26, 34. m ch. 39 : 9 ; Lev. 6 : 2 ; Ps. 51 : 4.

— (*Lo ! thou art about to die, or Lo, dead art thou !*) a dead man thou ! on account of, etc. “ *A man's wife,*” Heb.—*Married to a husband* (or lord). This may refer to his sickness as a plague for this wrong, (vs. 7.) A violation of the seventh commandment is here seemingly threatened with death. In this case it would have been an interference with the lineage of the Messiah. And in any case it subverts society and reduces civilized life to that of the brutes. The term, however, may mean *dead* as to *progeny*, which is rendered probable by vs. 17—“ *God healed Abimelech,*” etc.

4. Abimelech had not been guilty of the crime of which he seemed to be in danger. ¶ *Lord.* He was acquainted with the covenant name. He calls God *Adonai*, (Jehovah,) the incommunicable name. Here we find the knowledge of the true God yet retained in the Gentile world, under the Noachic covenant. ¶ *A righteous nation.* Sept. and Vulg. read, *Wilt thou slay a nation ignorant and righteous ?* This is a reference, probably, to the destruction visited upon Sodom, and a fear that the people might be destroyed along with himself.

5. Here the king vindicates his action so far as to disclaim any knowledge of her being married. He

also puts the blame of this upon Abraham's own words and Sarah's confirmation of his statement that they were only brother and sister. ¶ *In the integrity.* He pleaded that he had gone thus far in innocence of any such crime. He was wrong in taking her at all ; but he did not charge himself with this as criminal according to his ideas of right and the customs of the time.

6. (Heb.—*And the God*—in contrast with heathen idols.) And when God admitted this plea, it was in the sense in which it was uttered, as to the matter in hand,—the crime of adultery, of which he was innocent here. In this particular God *withheld him* from sinning against him. He was not pronounced wholly innocent of wrong-doing, but only of the crime in question, as the last clause shows. OBSERVE.—(1) The reason why he could yet claim innocence of “the great transgression” was God's restraining power and grace. (2.) What a hell on earth would there be, but for God's various restraints, in conscience, the Scripture, the Church, the civil law, education and society, and, most of all, the Holy Ghost. (3.) How thankful should every man be for God's restraints. (4.) What infinite need have we of a Saviour from sin.

7 Now therefore restore the man *his* wife ; ⁿ for he *is* a prophet, and he shall pray for thee, and thou shalt live : and if thou restore *her* not, ^o know thou that thou shalt surely die, thou ^p and all that *are* thine.

8 Therefore Abimelech rose early in the morning, and called all his servants, and told all these things in their ears : and the men were sore afraid.

9 Then Abimelech called Abraham, and said unto him, What hast thou done unto us ? and what have I offended thee, ^a that thou hast brought on me, and on my kingdom a great sin ? thou hast done deeds unto me ^r that ought not to be done.

n 1 Sam. 7 : 5 ; 2 Kings 5 : 11 ; Job 42 : 8 ; Jam. 5 : 14, 15 ; 1 John 5 : 16. o ch. 2 : 17
p Numb. 16 : 32, 33. q ch. 26 : 10 ; Exod. 32 : 21 ; Josh. 7 : 25. r ch. 34 : 7.

Augustine says : “ We see a sin is done *against God*, when it is in the eyes of men of small moment, because they treat lightly mere sins of the flesh.” (Ps. 51 : 3.)

7. Here God plainly gives the king to understand that he had done a grievous wrong, for which he would suffer but for Abraham's intercession. He must at once give back to Abraham his wife. He had done the wrong against a servant of God—a *prophet*. This was at once the aggravation of his offence and the ground of his hope of pardon. (נָבִיא) a prophet *προφήτης* one who speaks for God, as God's organ, the things of God. (Exod. 7 : 1 ; 4 : 15.) Abraham was a prophet, as the recipient of Divine revelation and the mediator and intercessor for the nations, to whom God reveals the doom of the people, as he is the channel of blessing to them. As he was admitted to intercede for Sodom, so he could plead for Abimelech. “ Touch not mine anointed, and do my prophets no harm,” (Ps. 105 : 15.) The King will need the office-work of the man whom he had wronged. He is put upon the alternative of making prompt restitution of Sarah, or of suffering death along with his house and people. (See Jer. 14 : 11 ; 15 : 1.) OBSERVE.—Enoch had

prophesied before this, as we learn from Jude, and Noah had uttered a prophetic blessing ; but Abraham is the first one in the Old Testament who is called a *prophet*.

8. The king acted promptly upon this Divine warning. He announced the facts to his household who were so deeply concerned in it. ¶ *Servants*. Court-officers. (1 Kings 1 : 2 ; 10 : 5 ; 2 Kings 6 : 8.) The effect was to alarm them exceedingly at the threatened judgments, having heard all that had so recently been visited by God upon the guilty cities of the plain for like iniquities.

9. Here the servant of the true God—a *prophet* of God—is called to account sharply by a heathen prince. It seemed to him as if it had been done to bring him into trouble. He justly requires explanation, and complains that by misrepresenting to him he had involved him and his people in a *great sin*. The king thus comes at length to see and confess that he has done a great wickedness—or, has had brought upon him a great judgment, and that he had not done anything heretofore against Abraham to deserve this at his hands. ¶ *That ought not*. Heb.—*Deeds which are not done* (among men), *thou hast done with me*. Sept.—*A thing which no one will do*.

10. And Abimelech said unto Abraham, What sawest thou, that thou hast done this thing?

11 And Abraham said, Because I thought, Surely, ^sthe fear of God is not in this place; and ^tthey will slay me for my wife's sake.

12 And yet indeed ^ushe is my sister; she is the daughter of my father, but not the daughter of my mother: and she became my wife.

13 And it came to pass, when ^xGod caused me to wander from my father's house, that I said unto her, This is thy kindness which thou shalt show unto me; at every place whither we shall come, ^ysay of me, He is my brother.

^s ch. 42: 18; Ps. 36: 1; Prov. 16: 6. ^t ch. 12: 12 and 26: 7. ^u ch. 11: 29. ^x ch. 12: 1, 9, 11, &c.; Heb. 11: 8. ^y ch. 12: 13.

10 Abimelech still presses upon Abraham for an explanation of so unheard of a proceeding. ¶ *What sawest thou?—What hadst thou in thine eye?*—as we would say. What could have been your object or motive?

11. Abraham has now two reasons to assign, both of them feeble and insufficient. (1.) His fear of the people's immoral habits and principles as being destitute of *the fear of God*. It was his vain expedient to shift for himself instead of trusting to God. This was his feeling before when he went down to Egypt; and then he had taken the same course and had suffered for it. (Ch. 12: 12 etc.) He doubtless thought that he ought to use the means for his protection. But they must be lawful and proper means, to be allowable in God's sight. We are not to do evil that good may come, nor that evil may be averted.

12. A second explanation he has to give is the plea that in a sense Sarah was his *sister*, as he alleged—explaining also that she was the daughter of his father, and not of his mother, (therefore his half-sister,) making it a half-truth. Abraham does not mean to vindicate his language so much as to show how he came to adopt this subterfuge. Sa-

rah is not mentioned in the genealogy of Terah, but probably she was his grand-daughter, and the daughter of Haran, and sister of Lot, and who was called *Sarai*—my princess—on her marriage with Abraham. Probably she was the same as *Iscah*, (ch. 11: 29.) In the idiom that was then commonly used, she was his *sister*. Sarah was only about ten years younger than Abraham, and Lot was about the same age as the patriarch himself. Others, however, think “that Terah had two wives, by one of whom he had Haran the father of Lot and Sarah, and by the other he had Abraham.”—See *Bush*. Abraham was guilty of a moral untruth in deceiving by designed concealment. Equivocation and dissembling to get out of trouble, only lead us into deeper trouble.

13. *God caused me*. The verb is here in the plural, though the noun Elohim is almost always used with a singular verb. *Keil* remarks “that on the subject of his emigration he here expresses himself indefinitely and with reserve, accommodating himself to the polytheistic stand-point of the Philistine king.” *When God*, (the gods,) etc. *Murphy* better suggests that if the verb be taken as plural, it is only an instance of the literal

14 And Abimelech ^z took sheep, and oxen, and men-servants, and women-servants, and gave *them* unto Abraham, and restored him Sarah his wife.

15 And Abimelech said, Behold, ^a my land *is* before thee: dwell where it pleaseth thee.

16 And unto Sarah he said, Behold, I have given ^b thy brother a thousand *pieces* of silver: ^c behold, he is to thee ^d a covering of the eyes unto all that *are* with thee, and with all *other*: thus she was reproved.

z ch. 12: 16 a ch. 13: 9. b ver. 5. c ch. 26: 11. d ch. 24: 65.

meaning of *Elohim* (the eternal supernatural powers) coming into view.

¶ *Caused me to wander*,—led me to commence an unsettled life in a foreign land. This is named in farther extenuation of the wrong—that he took this prudential course from fear in his lonely wanderings as a stranger in a strange land. But was not his covenant God to be trusted?

¶ *Thy kindness*. This was the pleasant, amicable understanding for mutual protection. Abraham will have it known just how it came about and that it was their understanding all along, and not merely in this case. He is put to shame on his own showing. How much safer and better to have trusted all to God!

14. The king here seems to accept the candid explanations—and induced also by his vision in regard to the position and Divine relation of Abraham, he makes amends and brings to him rich presents. He also restores to him his wife as God had commanded.

15. He shows his kind feeling by giving him leave to dwell in any part of his country, doubtless esteeming his presence of great advantage. Besides this, he had reason to value Abraham's prayers, (vs. 17, ch. 21: 22, 23.)

16. Heb.—*A thousand of silver to thy brother. Lo it is to thee a covering of the eyes.* The silver was in shekels probably about \$650. It was a pres-

ent not to her directly, but to Abraham. And he, in a gentle rebuke to them both, perhaps, is called her "brother," as they had claimed. "*A covering of the eyes*" here is not as some imagine a *veil*, understanding the present as money to buy a veil, (a large amount for that purpose,) but it is rather a *peace-offering*—in consideration of the damage done to them. To cover one's face is the Hebrew idiom for causing one to forget a wrong done. (See ch. 32: 20, 21. "I will cover his face," "I will appease him with the present," Job. 9: 24,) or for appeasing, as offering a pecuniary consideration, sometimes used of *bribes*. So, also, to *cover sin* is to pardon—see it no more. ¶ *Unto all that are with thee*—as all they of her family would be interested in this vindication of her character. ¶ *Thus she was reproved.* Heb.—*And thou art judged.* The verb is here to be taken as second person feminine, singular, Niphal. Heb.—*So thou art judged*—or justice has been done to thee.—*Keil and Delitzsch.* Murphy reads—*And all this that thou mayest be righted.* Literally—and with all and thou art judged, though the verb is commonly rendered to *reprove* or *rebuke*, yet also to *judge*, *convince*, *correct*, *reason*, *dispute*. (See ch. 31: 37.) This is the language of the king, and this is the attempt he makes very generously and kindly to set matters right be-

17 ¶ So Abraham ^e prayed unto God : and God healed Abimelech, and his wife, and his maid-servants ; and they bare *children*.

18 For the LORD ^f had fast closed up all the wombs of the house of Abimelech, because of Sarah, Abraham's wife.

CHAPTER XXI.

AND the LORD ^a visited Sarah as he had said, and the LORD did unto Sarah ^b as he had spoken.

^e Job 42 : 9, 10. ^f ch. 12 : 17. ^a 1 Sam. 2 : 21. ^b ch. 17 : 19, and 18 : 10, 14 ; Gal. 4 : 23, 28.

tween them. *Gerlach* reads *And she is justified*—that is, *now have I made all restitution*.

17. Abraham, also, is prompt to do his part according to the Divine plan, (vs. 7.) He acted the part of an intercessor with God for the king and his household. And his prayer was granted. God had pronounced the king *a dead man* (vs. 3.) on account of Sarah, which may refer to this, as here God is said to *heal* him; for he had been deadened as to progeny, (vs. 18.)

NOTE.—How magnanimous to acknowledge one's error, and to do the best to make amends. We can pray for those whom we have brought into trouble unadvisedly; and this we ought to do, that God may deliver and heal them. *Keil* notes the significant distinction here between the titles of God that are used. The cure of Abimelech and his house belonged to Elohim, (God.) Abraham directed his intercession, not to Elohim but to *Ha-Elohim*—the God, as the personal and true God. It was He, too, who had brought the disease upon Abimelech, not as Elohim or *Ha-Elohim*, but as Jehovah the God of salvation, (vs. 18,) for His design therein was to prevent the disturbance of His saving plan in the birth of the promised son from Sarah. The names Elohim and *Ha-Elohim*

indicate the same relation of God to Abimelech, and it was Jehovah who interposed for Abraham—God in His redemptive relation.

OBSERVE.—The repetition of Abraham's wrong doing in the course of twenty-four years is in nowise incredible considering the custom of the time. The details are quite different in the two cases. Abimelech is quite a better character than Pharaoh. He is a heathen, indeed, but with a moral sentiment open to receive God's word as Pharaoh was not. God shows Abraham that He can carry forward his plan of grace, despite all opposition of *earthly princes*.

CHAPTER XXI.

§ 42. BIRTH OF ISAAC. HAGAR AND ISHMAEL CAST OUT. Ch. 21 : 1–21.

The birth of Isaac is the first result of the covenant, and the first step towards its goal. As it is the germ of the future development, and looks to the greater than Isaac—the New Testament Son of Promise—so it is the personal and practical pledge, on God's part, that the salvation of the world shall be accomplished.

1. *The Lord (Jehovah) visited*. The covenant God. The term *visit* here denotes a friendly visit. But with

2 For Sarah ^c conceived, and bare Abraham a son in his old age, ^d at the set time of which God had spoken to him.

3 And Abraham called the name of his son that was born unto him, whom Sarah bare to him, ^e Isaac.

4 And Abraham ^f circumcised his son Isaac, being eight days old, ^g as God had commanded him.

5 And ^h Abraham was a hundred years old, when his son Isaac was born unto him.

^c Acts 7: 8; Gal. 4: 22; Heb. 11: 11. ^d ch. 17: 21. ^e ch. 17: 19. ^f Acts 7: 8. ^g ch. 17: 10, 12. ^h ch. 17: 1, 17.

the preposition "upon," it denotes a judicial visitation. See Exod. 28: 5. The announcement is here made of God's fidelity to His covenant promise, and of how the event fulfilled the expectation. This is narrated also to show that in this event, the plan of grace is unfolded, and that it occurs in the line of God's covenant arrangements. The son of promise is now to be born. Isaac is the germ of that promised seed in whom "all the nations of the earth shall be blessed." God will always do as "He hath said," and "as He hath spoken." *Calvin* says there is great emphasis in the repetition, calling the reader to pause in the consideration of so great a miracle.

2. *For.* Heb.—*And.* The event is now recited as being according to the very terms of the promise, (ch. 17: 6, 19, 21; 18: 14.) It is also recorded that this son was born to Abraham *in his old age*, that is, beyond the natural time, (vs. 7,) and thus not *according to nature*, (Gal. 4: 23) but *above nature*. It was also *at the set time* as promised in ch. 17: 21; ch. 18: 14. With God nothing can occur out of season, or aside from the appointed time. Circumcision pointed to the miraculous generation.

3. Here also the name is noticed as being the same as Divinely directed ch 17: 19. *Isaac* means *he shall laugh*—or *they (one) shall*

laugh. The name reminds of that which caused the laughter of Abraham and Sarah, (ch. 17: 17; 18: 12;) the physical impossibility according to natural laws. And as the name is associated with the fulfilment, it keeps in mind the contrast between the idea and the reality. Her laughter of incredulity is turned now into a laughter of joy at the event, (vs. 6.) The name *Isaac*, therefore, is most significant. Through this name, *Isaac* is designated as the fruit of omnipotent grace working against and above the forces of nature. It is as much as to say, this son of promise is indeed he the mention of whose birth was laughed at as impossible. So afterwards *Ishmael* laughed at him, as too weak to be the ground of such attention and such hopes, (vs. 9.) And the name keeps in view this contrast of the natural and the supernatural.

4. It is further narrated here that Abraham was strict to fulfil all the covenant conditions. The seal of the covenant circumcision was set upon the child, after the Divine direction and on the day specified. (Ch. 17: 10–12.)

5. The fact is here specially noted that this birth of Isaac was *above nature* and not according to nature. And thus the great miraculous birth of Jesus is foreshadowed; and it is also implied that what begins here in the Divine supernatural agency

6 ¶ And Sarah said, ⁱ God hath made me to laugh, so that all that hear ^k will laugh with me.

7 And she said, Who would have said unto Abraham, that Sarah should have given children suck? ¹ for I have borne *him* a son in his old age.

8 And the child grew, and was weaned: and Abraham made a great feast the *same* day that Isaac was weaned.

i Ps. 126 : 2; Isa. 54 : 1; Gal. 4 : 27. k Luke 1 : 58. 1 ch. 18 : 11, 12.

shall be continued by the highest Divine working. As the birth was at Abraham's century time, so it was about thirty years after his call. The miracle was manifest, in that it was after sixty years of their fruitless marriage union.

6. *To laugh.* Heb.—*God hath made laughter to me.* "A laughing hath God prepared for me."—*Keil.* Benisch reads, "God hath made me (a person) to be laughed at. All that hear it will laugh at me." But the former is better. The allusion is to the *laughing* of Abraham and Sarah at the announcement. "This is an occasion for laughing indeed such as I had little thought when it was first told me—not now of delight mixed with doubt, but of wonder and joy unmingled with distrust. This laughter God has given to me to vindicate His promise and to rebuke my unbelief." Paul, in the Hebrews, ascribes her preternatural strength to her faith, in believing the promise, though she at first received it with some misgiving. (Heb. 11 : 11.) ¶ *Will laugh with me.* Sept.—*Rejoice with me.* Ps. Jon.—Be astonished with me. Rejoice with amazement at the Divine blessing.

7. *Who would have said.* The natural incredibility of the event enhances her joy and wonder. And so her testimony is here recorded to the amazing power and grace of God in making good His covenant promises. God is wont to get such clear and

express testimonies to His miraculous works, to show that they were not by any means natural. And it was most important that this event be witnessed to by the glad mother as being not *κατα φύσιν* but *παρά φύσιν* (Gal.) natural indeed in its progress and issue, but not therefore in its origin. ¶ *Who would have said.* How naturally un-supposable. Who ever would have reported such a thing would have been counted mad. ¶ *Sarah should,* etc. Heb.—*Sarah is suckling children.* Yet it is even so! *For I have borne him,* etc. This is the mother's new-found joy which she herself can scarcely credit. This laughter is referred to in Isa. 49 : 13; 52 : 9; and by Paul, Gal. 4 : 7—"Rejoice," etc.

8. *The child grew.* The same term is used by Luke (ch. 2 : 40) to record the natural growth of the child Jesus. It is commonly inferred that a babe was not weaned until the third year, (1 Sam. 1 : 22-24. See 2 Chron. 31 : 16,) but perhaps in the second year—and not in all cases quite the same. The time in this case is important only to ascertain Ishmael's age at being cast out. "As the weaning is the first step in the direction of independent existence, it was therefore solemnized by a feast." The child usually remained during the first five years under the special care of the mother. (Lev. 27 : 6.) After that the son came under the management of the father.

9 ¶ And Sarah saw the son of Hagar ^m the Egyptian, ⁿ which she had borne unto Abraham, ^o mocking.

10 Wherefore she said unto Abraham, ^p Cast out this bond-woman, and her son; for the son of this bond-woman shall not be heir with my son, *even* with Isaac.

m ch. 16: 1. n ch. 16: 15. o Gal. 4: 29. p Gal. 4: 30; ch. 25: 6, and 36: 6, 7.

9. Now is recorded the casting out of Ishmael—the son of a human expedient. This was (1.) To make the whole hope depend upon the son specially given by God. (2.) To separate this hostile element from the covenant family. Though this was in the plan of God, yet there was to be an occasion for it, and that was the wilful *mocking* of Isaac by Ishmael. The term for *mocking* is here rather *making sport*; and the verb is in the intensive mood. Gr.—*παίζοντα*—*making fun*. It is the verb to *laugh*, but in this intensive form, meaning *profane jesting*, but referring also to the *laughter* already recorded, and showing the relation of the party, as before. It was here the laugh of derision and of scorn, and not of joy. In the Galatians (ch. 4: 29) Paul speaks of it as *persecution*. Rightly was the child of promise called “*One shall laugh*,” at whom all laugh with various expressions of incredulity, wonder, gladness, and scorn. Ishmael would naturally see himself very much displaced in the paternal attentions and affections by this newborn Isaac, and would naturally express his envy and opposition. So the elder son, the brother of the prodigal was angry. Ishmael was now at least fifteen years of age—perhaps seventeen. He was thirteen at his circumcision. (Ch. 17: 25.) A year passed before Isaac’s birth. And since this time, at least another year had elapsed, probably more, before the weaning. Sarah saw the mocking of Ishmael, and could not endure

it. This persecution of him that was after the Spirit, by him that was after the flesh, (Gal. 4: 29,) led to the rejection and dismissal here recorded. And this Paul takes to be a type of what shall be the opposition between the fleshly, carnal membership of the churches, and the true spiritual disciples. Ishmael would say or feel,—“How absurd that this little helpless Isaac, about whom there is such an ado, should be the father of nations!” Unbelief, envy, pride, were the motives of his conduct. (See *Hengstenberg*, Pent. I.) It was thus apparent that this son of the Egyptian woman was unfit to be the son of promise. He was already inwardly separated from the household of faith. Let him now be openly thrust out. Already the affliction of the Egyptians was suffered by Abraham, which was to continue through the four hundred years. The child of Hagar, as a Gentile slave, would be also a slave.

10. The provocation given by Ishmael for his dismissal by Sarah’s request, is thus expressly recorded. ¶ *Cast out*. Paul to the Galatians, uses this historical passage, as to be allegorically explained; that is, the facts have an underlying sense; namely, that there are two dispensations represented by Hagar and Sarah,—the Law and the Gospel,—and two classes of sons in the visible church, as there are these two in the family of Abraham—the one of the legal spirit, the other of the gospel; the one after the flesh, the other after the spirit; the former persecuting

11 And the thing was very grievous in Abraham's sight, ^a because of his son.

12 ¶ And God said unto Abraham, Let it not be grievous in thy sight, because of the lad, and because of thy bond-woman; in all that Sarah hath said unto thee, hearken unto her voice: ^r for in Isaac shall thy seed be called.

13 And also of the son of the bond-woman will I make ^s a nation, because he is thy seed.

14 And Abraham rose up early in the morning, and took bread, and a bottle of water, and gave it unto Hagar, putting it on her shoulder, and the child, and ^t sent her away: and she departed, and wandered in the wilderness of Beer-sheba.

q ch. 17: 18. r Rom. 9: 7, 8; Heb. 11: 18. s ver. 18; ch. 16: 10, and 17: 20. t John 8: 35.

and opposing the latter. But the separation must be made as is here done in Abraham's house. The son of the bondwoman—the Ishmael—the children of bondage, of the Judaizing, legal spirit, must be cast out, as not allowed to inherit along with the son of the free woman. They who are in bondage to the righteousness of the law, do thus scorn and persecute those who are of the free spirit of the gospel. They cannot live in the same house. (1.) The same great idea runs through all the history of the church, and pervades all the Scripture and all God's dealings. (2.) We see the unity of the Bible and of the church. ¶ *Cast out.* The term means sometimes to *divorce*, disown. And this idea may be conveyed here. ¶ *My son.* This was the sting.

11. Ishmael was Abraham's son, though not Sarah's; and this stern, imperious demand was grievous to him. Heb.—*The word (or thing) was evil exceedingly in the eyes of Abraham on account of his son.* He could not think of casting his son Ishmael out upon the cold world, beloved as he was to him, (ch. 17: 18.) OBSERVE.—Abraham alone is called the friend of God in the Old Testament, and only after his death,

(2 Chron. 20: 7; Is. 41: 8.) And James calls attention to this fact, (Jas. 2: 23.)

12. *God.* The term *Jehovah* is not here used, as there was no appearing, but an inward revelation of God's will, without the agency of the Covenant Angel. He charges Abraham with the reasonableness of this demand of Sarah, seeing that it was the Divine plan to have the covenant posterity in the line of Isaac. ¶ *In Isaac shall thy seed be called.* “*Shall seed (posterity) be called to thee.*”—*Keil.* Not “*through Isaac shall seed be raised to thee.*”—*Benisch.* But “*in the person of Isaac shall there be posterity to thee which shall pass as such.*”—*Keil.* In Heb. *to be called* is the same as *to be*. Isaac is the covenant seed in whom “*thy seed,*” in the highest sense, as the Messiah (Gal. 3: 16,) shall be, and be recognized.

13. Yet Ishmael was not to be excluded from the Divine promise and favor, but because of his being the son of Abraham, he was to be *constituted a nation*, as was promised, (ch. 16: 10 and 17: 20.)

14. Abraham obeyed the Divine direction, painful though it had been to him to contemplate. ¶ *Bread* is often used as a general term for pro-

15 And the water was spent in the bottle, and she cast the child under one of the shrubs.

16 And she went, and sat her down over against *him*, a good way off, as it were a bow-shot: for she said, Let me not see the death of the child. And she sat over against *him*, and lifted up her voice, and wept.

17 And ^u God heard the voice of the lad: and the angel of God

u Ex. 3: 7.

visions, or food of different kinds. ¶ *A bottle of water.* This was a skin of a goat or kid, made so as to hold water. And it is still the mode at the East. We came, on a hot day's journey, to a cistern excavated in the limestone rock, holding rain-water, and at once the skin bottle was let down into the water with a cord. At the first drawing we noticed some hairs from the skin in the water, but, pouring it out, the second draught was perfectly clear. Such a supply, however, as she could carry *on her shoulder* would not last long for her journey. ¶ *And the child.* The last clause is in parenthesis, so that we read "*he took bread, etc., and he gave it and the child unto Hagar.*" Of course we are not to understand that he put the child on her shoulder along with the water-skin. The boy was fully sixteen years of age, as we suppose. (See vs. 8.) The term here rendered "*child*" means rather, "*lad*"—*boy—youth*. (See ch. 4: 23.) Boys often married at that age in the East. ¶ *The wilderness* is not a desert, but a wild, uncultivated district of open commons. ¶ *Of Beersheba.* Adjacent to this town where Abraham was probably residing. It may be here so named by the historian, though possibly not so called until afterwards. NOTE.—Abraham has by some been charged with severity in this. But not so. He acted according to the Divine direction. Hagar obtained her freedom by this dismissal. And they were not excluded

from the covenant by this (since Ishmael had been circumcised and had covenant promises), nor from intercourse with Abraham's house. (Ch. 25: 9.) Besides, at this age, boys in the East are commonly sent out to do for themselves. (See also ch. 25: 6.) She may have set her face towards her native Egypt.

15. In the hot plains the water gave out, and the lad was exhausted. The mother *cast the child under one of the shrubs*,—that is, she let go his hand, as he sank to the ground, and, in a despairing mood, laid him away under a bush, in the shade, as if to die.

16. The mother, retiring from the painful sight of her famishing boy, yet keeping faithful watch at a distance of a bow-shot (Heb.—*in the distance, as archers*) is touchingly natural. The meaning is, as far off as archers take their stand, or set their target. As we came to the Dead Sea on a very hot day, and much athirst, one of our Arab attendants sank exhausted on the sand. A physician of our company took out his flask of brandy to minister to his relief; but he stoutly refused it, as the Koran forbids the use of strong drink. It was only after some hours' delay that he could follow us.—The attitude of the heart-broken mother is described with the utmost simplicity. The *Sept.* reads here, "*The boy wept.*"

17. It was Ishmael's voice, and not Hagar's, that God is said to have heard; for the lad had the promise

called to Hagar out of heaven, and said unto her, What aileth thee, Hagar? Fear not, for God hath heard the voice of the lad where he is.

18 Arise, lift up the lad, and hold him in thine hand: for ^w I will make him a great nation.

19 And ^x God opened her eyes, and she saw a well of water: and she went, and filled the bottle with water, and gave the lad drink.

20 And God ^y was with the lad; and he grew, and dwelt in the wilderness, ^z and became an archer.

21 And he dwelt in the wilderness of Paran: and his mother ^a took him a wife out of the land of Egypt.

^w ver. 13. ^x Numb. 22: 31; 2 Kings 6: 17, 18, 20; Luke 24: 16, 31. ^y ch. 28: 15, and 39: 2, 3, 21. ^z ch. 16: 12. ^a ch. 24: 4.

which secured for him a hearing. Yet it is "*God*" who heard him, and not "*Jehovah*;" for now the lad is removed from the covenant circle to the outside world, under the general Divine Providence. The lad is not said to have cried (only the mother), but it is here implied. God calls to her out of heaven, showing His careful watch of her, as she kept watch of the lad. "Like as a father pitieth His children."—"As one whom his mother comforteth." Hagar is charged *not to fear*, because of God's hearing the voice of the lad. It is all along implied that she is regarded for his sake.

18. The distressed mother is bidden to get up and lift up her boy. ¶ *Hold him.* Heb.—*Take firm hold of him with thy hand.* The promise already made respecting him is here repeated, as the ground upon which he was to be cared for.

19. *Opened.* Sam. Vers.—*enlightened.* "Having been previously astonished with grief, she did not discern what was plainly before her eyes."—*Calvin.* (See Numb. 22: 31.) So we do not see "the fountain opened for sinners in this world's wilderness till God opens our eyes."

20. *Was with the lad.* Chald.—"And the Word of the Lord was for the help of the child." God guarded,

guided, and prospered the lad. *And he became.* Heb.—*And he became, when he grew up, an archer.* Sam.—*a skilful archer.* The descendants of Ishmael were celebrated for their skill in the use of the bow. (Is. 21: 17.) That he *dwelt in the wilderness* is repeated in the next verse to lay stress upon his roving life as a hunter.

21. *The wilderness of Paran.* The caravan route to Egypt from Beersheba lay through the desert. It is for the most part desolate and dry. "It is the large desert of *El Tih*, which stretches along the southern border of Canaan, from the west fringe of the Arabah towards the east of the Desert of Shur, on the frontier of Egypt, and extends southward to the promontories of the Mountains of Horeb. On its northern edge lay Beersheba, whither Abraham had removed from Gerar; so that, in all probability, Hagar and Ishmael were sent away from his abode there, and had wandered about in the surrounding desert, till Hagar was afraid that they should perish of thirst."—*Keil and Delitzsch.* ¶ *A wife.* Here it is shown that he took up his abode in the wilderness, and led the life of a roving hunter, and adopted the habits of a wilderness man—"a wild man," (ch. 16: 16,)—till at length he and his tribe

22 ¶ And it came to pass at that time, that ^b Abimelech and Phichol the chief captain of his host spake unto Abraham, saying, ^c God is with thee in all that thou doest:

23 Now, therefore, ^d swear unto me here by God, that thou wilt not deal falsely with me, nor with my son, nor with my son's son: but according to the kindness that I have done unto thee, thou shalt do unto me, and to the land wherein thou hast sojourned.

b ch. 20: 2, and 26: 26. c ch. 26: 28. d Josh. 2: 12; 1 Sam. 24: 21.

became a bandit band,—his hand against every man and every man's hand against him. That he married a wife out of Egypt is here stated, to prepare us for the sketch of his descendants, (ch. 25: 12–18,) the Bedouin Arabs. This also completed the estrangement of Ishmael's line from that of Isaac, as Egypt was the land of his mother's birth and of heathen superstition. That the mother chose his wife was according to the established usage of Eastern nations for the parent to make the choice of a husband or a wife for the children.

§ 43. ABRAHAM AND ABIMELECH. Ch. 21: 22–34.

22. THE FIRST TREATY. The king and his chief-captain come to Beersheba, where Abraham dwelt. Here follows a treaty of Abimelech with Abraham. Expediency, not less than piety, led him to seek a closer alliance with the patriarch whom he saw to be so nearly allied to God. Here was a fulfilment of the promise, in part. (Ch. 12: 2.) Abimelech had noticed remarkable favors of God shown to Abraham. (1.) In the defeat of the four kings. (2.) In the twofold deliverance of Sarah. (3.) In the miraculous birth of Isaac. Besides this, the appearing of God to him in favor of Abraham, the certainty of a large posterity in Isaac, and the growing power of this patriarch, who ten years ago

led out three hundred and eighteen trained servants, made the king anxious for the alliance.—*De Sola*. He was also probably acquainted with the tenor of the promises made to Abraham for the possession of Canaan, and he was anxious to secure the integrity of his own territory, as King of the Philistines. ¶ *Phichol*. This name of the king's commander-in-chief means "*mouth of all*,"—that is, *all-commanding*. This was probably an official title, like that of Abimelech. The presence of this chief officer along with the king on this occasion would imply that it was a public compact. "It is very probable that this event took place before some of the facts recorded in the previous passage and soon after the birth of Isaac."—*Murphy*. ¶ *God is with thee*, etc. This conviction was enough to prompt him to such a procedure. Abraham was called *the friend of God* as being one who was befriended by God in an especial manner. And the humblest Christian has a dignity and a power in the world on this same account; so that often men wish to secure their interest with God on their behalf.

23. A solemn oath was sought of Abraham, *not to deal falsely*. Lit.—*that thou wilt not lie to me*. It was a compact for his own security and that of his descendants—*son and son's son*. Sept.—*Neither my seed nor my name*. ¶ *But*. The king lays claim to such kind treatment on the ground of kindness already shown by him to

24 And Abraham said, I will swear.

25 And Abraham reprov'd Abimelech because of a well of water, which Abimelech's servants ^e had violently taken away.

26 And Abimelech said, I wot not who hath done this thing : neither didst thou tell me, neither yet heard I *of it*, but to-day.

27 And Abraham took sheep and oxen, and gave them unto Abimelech : and both of them ^f made a covenant.

28 And Abraham set seven ewe-lambs of the flock by themselves.

29 And Abimelech said unto Abraham, ^g What mean these seven ewe-lambs, which thou hast set by themselves ?

e ch. 26: 15, 18, 20, 21, 22. f ch. 26: 31. g ch. 33: 8.

the patriarch. (Ch. 20: 14-16.) Sept. — *According to the righteousness*, etc. ¶ *And to the land.* The king was evidently fearful of such a power as Abraham's, as endangering his territory, especially as the patriarch had proved himself a strong military chieftain and so successful in war, and as he had already an alliance with the neighboring chiefs, Aner, Eshcol, and Mamre.

24. *I will swear.* The term *to swear* in the Heb. is the verbal form of the number *seven*, because *seven* with the Hebrews was a sacred number, the *seventh day* being from the beginning a sacred part of time. And oaths were confirmed either by *seven sacrifices*, (as here, vs. 28,) or by *seven witnesses* and pledges. (See *Gesenius*.) "Thus worthily does the first chapter in the history of treaties open."—*Kitto*.

25. There was a matter of dispute to be settled before the treaty should be solemnized. Abimelech's men had taken advantage of Abraham about a well. This was indeed a point of difficulty, showing the delicate relations of the parties. The Philistines were naturally jealous of this right which the digging of a well was understood to give to the land, as a lien upon it, lest Abraham's people might thus acquire a title in

their country, and claim possession at length. Hence, when Abraham left that district, they took care to fill up the wells which he had dug. And hence the renewed and bitter strife with Isaac when he afterwards came and cleared out those wells, and dug new ones for himself. (See *Kitto's Pict. Hist. of Pal.*, p. 61.)

26. The king promptly replied to Abraham's complaint that he had heard nothing of this violent proceeding of his own men until that very day; that he knew nothing of who had thus transgressed, and that Abraham had not given information of the wrong till then, else it might sooner have been rectified.

27. This present of sheep and oxen was quite extra to the common ceremony of covenanting, and was meant to express Abraham's goodwill, and to give special emphasis to the transaction. Besides some of these he set aside for a *witness*. And altogether "it was a material pledge that he would reciprocate the kindness shown, and live in friendship with the king and his descendants."—*Keil and Delitzsch*. *Bush* suggests that these animals may have been given to the king to offer before the Lord.

28-30. It was not to redeem the well, but to secure a public and

30 And he said, For *these* seven ewe-lambs shalt thou take of my hand that ^h they may be a witness unto me that I have digged this well.

31 Wherefore he ⁱ called that place Beer-sheba; because there they swore both of them.

32 Thus they made a covenant at Beer-sheba; then Abimelech rose up, and Phichol the chief captain of his host, and they returned into the land of the Philistines.

33 ¶ And Abraham planted a grove in Beer-sheba, and ^k called there on the name of the LORD, ^l the everlasting God.

^h ch. 31: 48, 52. ⁱ ch. 26: 33. ^k ch. 4: 26. ^l Deut. 33: 27; Isa. 40: 28; Rom. 16: 26; 1 Tim. 1: 17.

formal concession or agreement about the well as his property, that the present was given. This giving of presents to ratify a treaty is common with Oriental nations; and here Abraham gave the present in token of his good feeling as a subject, and of his satisfaction with the king's explanation, and with his acknowledgment of his property in the well. The reception of the gifts was a pledge that there would no longer be any dispute of Abraham's claim. In this dealing in *seven*, the sacred number, there was the form of an oath.

31. *Beersheba*. The name means *Well of seven*, or *well of an oath*, the term for *seven* being akin to that for *oath*. Keil and Delitzsch take it to mean '*seven-well*,' from the seven lambs by which Abraham secured possession of the well. It is now known as *Bir-es-Seba*. (See Ritter Erd. vol. 14.) ¶ *They swear*. Lit.—they *seven-ed* themselves. According to Herodotus, (3, 8,) the Arabians among others chose some *seven* things to *give validity to an oath*.

32. Nothing is said expressly of slaying animals in this covenant—unless it be implied in the phrase (here and in vs. 27) which is literally, "And *they cut a covenant*,"—which phrase originally refers to the dissecting of the animals and passing be-

tween the parts. (Ch. 26: 33.) The Philistine king and chief now return from Beersheba on the border to their land, (Gerar.) Beersheba was in the *Wady es Seba*, twelve hours journey to the south of Hebron. Two deep wells with pure sweet water are reported by Robinson, and are called *Bir es Seba*.

33. *Planted a grove*. Sept.—*A field*. Ps. Jon. and Jer. Targ.—*A paradise (or garden)*. Onk., Syr., Ar.—*A tree*. It is properly the Oriental *tamarisk* tree or *grove*. This was a religious act, it would seem, like building a temple for worship, for himself and his people. And from ch. 12: 6, 7, and 13: 18, we learn that there were such groves at Moreh and at Mamre. "This was evidently a pre-Mosaic usage, since, in consequence of its subsequent perversion, it was, in the Levitical law denounced." (Deut. 16: 21.) "The planting of this long-lived tree with its hard wood and its long, narrow, thickly clustered, evergreen leaves, was to be a type of the ever-enduring grace of the faithful covenant God."—Keil and Delitzsch. This planting, too, implies that Abraham now felt himself more settled in the land. He "*calls upon the name of Jeovah the everlasting God*." By thi name he confesses Him as faithful and true to His promises forever.

34 And Abraham sojourned in the Philistines' land many days.

CHAPTER XXII.

AND it came to pass after these things, that ^a God did tempt Abraham, and said unto him, Abraham: and he said, Behold, *here I am.*

a 1 Cor. 10 : 13 ; Heb. 11 : 17 ; Jam. 1 : 12 ; 1 Pet. 1 : 7.

34. Though the king and his general-in-chief are said to have returned from their interview with Abraham to the land of the Philistines, (vs. 32,) yet the latter is said to have sojourned in that land. Beersheba was on the border of it, and did not belong to Gerar, the kingdom of Abimelech in the strictest sense, though the Philistines claimed the district as their own, as is plain from their seizing the well from Abraham. Besides, the patriarch would occupy pasture grounds in that whole region; and as he was invited to dwell in the land, (ch. 20 : 15,) he would be, properly speaking, a *sojourner* there, as a nomad shepherd.

CHAPTER XXII.

§ 44. TRIAL OF ABRAHAM. ISAAC AND THE SACRIFICE. COVENANT PROMISE RENEWED.

Abraham's faith works. It must endure also. First of all he had to part from his country and kindred at God's call. Next, he must go at the stress of famine to a land of strangers. He did it, and returned. Then he must have his kinsman separate from him for richer territory. Next he must go out in battle against plundering kings and their hordes. Then he must go through the grievous doubts about his posterity, and about the promise of blessing to mankind through him. After having a son through his bond-maid, he is called

to cast him out and surrender his natural, paternal affection to the demand of faith. And now, as he has been in the school of trial with such various and difficult lessons, he has to master one more, the hardest of all. Now that his whole soul rests on Isaac as the covenant son for whom Ishmael had been given up, he is called to give up Isaac, and see no other son of promise, according to the flesh, through whom the covenant can be made good. And yet in Isaac's offering the faith that is so sorely tried comes to see the New Testament Isaac as the greater Son of promise, and risen from the dead. So that this Jesus testifies of him: "Abraham rejoiced to see my day. He saw it and was glad." (John 8 : 56.) Abraham was thus led to see, in picture, how God would bless the nations in him through Christ. ¶ *God.* Heb.—*The God.* The personal, true God, not any tempter, as Satan, and not to tempt to sin. (See James 1 : 13.) ¶ *Tempt.* Geneva Vers.—*Did prove.* Sept.—*Tried.* The word means to *try*, or *prove*, to *put to the test*. This is set forth as God's intent in the transaction—not to sanction human sacrifice, but to test Abraham's faith and obedience. "The issue also shows that God did not desire the sacrifice of Isaac by slaying and burning him upon the altar, but his complete surrender, and a willingness to offer him up to God even by death. Nevertheless the Divine command was given in such a form that Abra-

ham could not understand it in any other way than as requiring an outward burnt offering, because there was no other way in which Abraham could accomplish the complete surrender of Isaac, than by an actual preparation for really offering the desired sacrifice."—*Keil and Delitzsch*. This constituted the trial so severe, beyond conception. In God's view, and for the purpose in hand, it was regarded as a burnt offering, for he is said to have "received him from the dead in a figure" (Heb. 11 : 19.) and to have "*done this thing*," vs. 16. Luther says: "The human reason simply concluded that either the promise was false, or that the command was not of God but of the devil." Yet upon a last analysis, faith concluded that "God was able to raise him up even from the dead." And as faith gave him up for dead, so faith received him from the dead, and saw in him the risen Lord. Faith is worth trial, (1 Pet. 1 : 7,) more than gold is worth refining. "It belongs to the dignity of a moral being to be put to a moral probation. Such assaying of the will and conscience is worthy both of God the assayer and of man the assayed."—*Murphy*. The spot where the patriarch was directed to do this work of faith, being the same site on which the temple was afterwards built, was designed to show the great Messianic idea running through all the history in all the ages. *Lange* and others understand that Abraham was in error in supposing that God called for the actual sacrifice on the altar when He demanded only the surrender. But why then direct him to go to such a distance with all the preparations for the offering if He had not meant to be so understood? But what was the need for this trial? As yet, observe, Abraham was claiming Isaac as of his own body and this fleshly affection contended with the

spiritual which regarded him as a child of grace and of promise. But if his faith is to be perfected, he must deny his fleshly love to his son, that the promise of God might remain the sole basis of his affection, and also of his hope in Him. He must give him up to the dead as his natural offspring, so as to receive him from the dead as the mere gift of God—as purely and simply the son of promise. OBSERVE.—(1.) All the imagined difficulty about the Divine call for human sacrifice here, is relieved when we consider that here is a typical reference to the sacrifice of *the man*, Christ Jesus—the only human sacrifice that God will sanction. It was expedient and necessary that *one man* should die for the people. So far as the heathen practised human sacrifices, the practice arose from a sense of the insufficiency of animal sacrifices. The true idea of human sacrifice, however, was as yet only to be hinted of in Isaac, as the type of Him in whom it was to be fulfilled. *Behold the Man!* This was, therefore, not an accomplished human sacrifice, but only foreshadowed in this constructive offering, and like the whole Old Testament system it pointed forward for its completion and fulfilment to the Man, Christ Jesus, who was furnished with a human body and soul, in order to suffer death as a vicarious sacrifice—A MAN *for men*. "Being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient unto death." OBSERVE, further, (2.) This offering by the patriarch of his only son, was an impressive exhibition of the Father's act in giving up his only begotten Son to die for sinners. *Further*, (3.) In the person of Abraham as father and head of the faithful, the various trials of believers in all time are exhibited. God tries those whom He loves—puts them to the test. And yet we

2 And he said, Take now thy son, ^b thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest, and get thee ^c into the land of Moriah; and offer him there for a burnt-offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of.

b Heb. 11 : 17. c 2 Chron. 3 : 1.

are neither to seek trials, nor to be indifferent to them. Jesus has bidden us to pray "Lead us not into temptation." ¶ *Behold.* He responds, *Lo here I am*—ready.

2. *Said.* "There is great emphasis in this word *said*, because God indeed made trial of Abraham's faith not in the usual manner, but by drawing him into a contest with his own word."—*Calvin.* ¶ *Take now thy son thine only one Isaac, whom thou lovest*, etc. Sept.—*Thy beloved.* The Heb. term *only*, in Prov. 4 : 3, is rendered *beloved*. We all see how the one merges into the other. So he is called "his only begotten son." (Heb. 11 : 17.) This reminds us of "the only begotten of the Father," and it is meant so to do—pointing all along to him. How the one sentence of the command heaps up the terms of anguish that go like sharp swords to the soul of the father! OBSERVE.—The fundamental principle of the Mosaic code, is that the first-born is consecrated to God in memory of the salvation of Israel's first-born from the slaughter that came upon the households of Egypt. (Ex. 13 : 2 ; 22 : 28.) The substitution of an animal victim for the first-born son was allowed, but it is placed thus in the right light; for this adoption by God of the *imperfect* for the *perfect*, (the animal for the son) is precisely the meaning of the Mosaic system.—*Hüevernick.* It is only the highest idea of this picture in the death of the only begotten and well beloved son of the Father, which is the basis of the gospel message and of our Christian hope. (Rom. 8 : 32.) ¶ *Land of Moriah.* Sept.—*The high*

land—the land seen or beheld. Keil and Delitzsch and Hengs. make *Moriah* "the shown of Jehovah," i. e., the manifestation of Jehovah, as the term *Jehovah-jireh* implies (see vs. 14) from the same verb *to see* and—here *Hoph. Part.—to show.* Onk. and Arab.—*The land of Divine worship.* Sam. Vers. and Vulg. *The land of vision.* Some make it mean "*Mount of Jehovah*," from מֶרֶץ elevation הֶהָרֶה Jehovah. It is here named in advance with a foreshadowing of the event, and of God's appearing to Abraham there. "*The land of Moriah*" is a general phrase for the mountainous district of Jerusalem. But this *Moriah* is the same with the site upon which Solomon built the temple, and was so called (2 Sam. 24 : 16, 17) when the old name was revived on another occasion than this. (See 2 Chron. 3 : 1.) It is improbable that there were two *Moriahs*, and the temple mount was often called "the mount of the Lord." (Isa. 2 : 3 ; 30 : 29 ; Mic. 4 : 2 ; Zech. 8 : 3.) (2.) It is the same distance of about twenty and one half hours, as travelled by Abraham, from Beersheba. (3.) From the general phrase "*Land of Moriah*," the name became afterwards applied to the temple mount, one of the mountains of Jerusalem opposite the Mount of Olives. Kurtz thinks that Jehovah chose this mountain where the temple worship was to be established, in order to give Divine sanction to the substitution of animals in sacrifice. Yet a further and higher reference was to the event of our Lord's sacrifice in that immediate vicinity; for Calvary was not a dis-

3 ¶ And Abraham rose up early in the morning, and saddled his ass, and took two of his young men with him, and Isaac his son, and clave the wood for the burnt-offering, and rose up, and went unto the place of which God had told him.

4 Then on the third day Abraham lifted up his eyes and saw the place afar off.

5 And Abraham said unto his young men, Abide ye here with the ass, and I and the lad will go yonder and worship, and come again to you.

inct mountain by itself, but only a rocky knoll, near by. Melchizedek also, as "Priest of the Most High God," ministered hereabouts. A ravine ran between Moriah and Mount Zion, and was bridged over by Solomon. ¶ *Offer him up*, etc. Heb.—*Make him go up for a burnt offering*. Might not the dear old father have cried out, "*Anything but this!*" How can I? How can my covenant God command it? Does He mean to deny Himself—to break His own covenant? It cannot be. The command is directly in the face of the promise. Is there not a mistake? Nay, but God commands it. What then? Cannot God "raise him up even from the dead?" But even then how can his faith rally the courage to slay his son? But may not a living faith like Abraham's have power to hush every natural questioning and complaint, and to go bravely forward even to such a task?

3. *Rose up*, etc. We hear no debate, no murmur. He took no counsel with flesh and blood. *Early in the morning* after the revelation came to him in the night, he set out with Isaac and two servants, made ready his ass, and even cut the wood for the sacrifice; thus at the start making the most ample preparations to do the very work of offering up his son. ¶ *Rose up*. This is repeated to express the rising in the morning to the preparations, and then the setting out to the work. It was all ac-

cording to God's commandment—as God had told him. This was his sole warranty and guide.

4. *On the third day*. Reckoning the distance as forty-five miles if they travelled fifteen miles on the first day (partly passed) and twenty miles on the second day, then, allowing ten miles of travel for the third day, (in part,) they came in sight of the place. (See *Murphy*.) Jewish tradition says that the place was indicated by a cloud of glory or a pillar of fire. *Calvin* supposes that Abraham recognized the place as what he had seen in the vision. But God made it apparent to him. Is there a reference here to the third day of our Lord's resurrection?

5. How this reminds us of our Lord in Gethsemane when He said to His disciples "Tarry ye here, while I go and pray yonder." Going into such an agony he could not admit others to go with him. "The heart knoweth its own bitterness." They would not understand the strange proceedings, and would only embarrass him in it all. ¶ *Worship*. If the cloud of the Divine glory marked out the mount, Abraham would recognize the invitation to worship there, where the Covenant Angel dwelt. ¶ *We will come—I and the lad*. Had his faith then already concluded that God would somehow interpose for Isaac's preservation? "Accounting that God was able to raise him up even from

6 And Abraham took the wood of the burnt-offering, and ^a laid it upon Isaac his son; and he took the fire in his hand and a knife: and they went both of them together.

7 And Isaac spake unto Abraham his father, and said, My father: and he said, Here *am* I, my son. And he said, Behold the fire and the wood: but where *is* the lamb for a burnt-offering?

d John 19: 17.

the dead." (Heb. 11: 17.) Doubtless his mind was kept in perfect peace by being stayed on God. How else could he have thus proceeded?

6. *Laid it.* Is this a type of our blessed Lord, the New Testament Isaac, bearing his cross? It was a trial to Isaac as well as to Abraham. The son of promise must bear his cross of sacrifice. "The Lord hath laid on him the iniquities of us all." (Isa. 53: 6.) Isaac's faith also triumphs. He inquires, but goes meekly on. OBSERVE.—It appears that Isaac was not a mere boy, but a young man able to carry the amount of wood necessary to consume the offering. Some, as *Josephus*, make him to have been twenty-five years old. Others, as the *Rabbins*, make him older. Some insist that his age was thirty-three, corresponding with that of the antitype, who was of this *average age* of man when He died for man's sins.

7, 8. Only the scenes of Gethsemane and Calvary surpass this—and the antitype is more than the type. ¶ *My father.* Isaac broke the dreadful mysterious silence with this touching inquiry, which, as Bishop Hall well says, "must have gone to Abraham's heart as deeply as the knife could possibly have gone to Isaac's." If any word or deed could have broken the father down, it would surely have been this innocent and pleading question. Could the father have forgotten? Has Isaac no misgiving of the

plan? Could there be a burnt sacrifice and no victim? ¶ *Where is the lamb?—Where is any of the flock?* —Benisch. The term is used also for a kid of the goats. How like the inquiry of the Great Sacrifice. "He looked and there was none to help, and he wondered *that there was no Intercessor.*" But Jesus answered that question. "Sacrifice and offering thou wouldst not, (of bulls and goats,) but a body hast thou prepared me." (Heb. 10: 5.) ¶ *God will provide, etc.* Heb.—*God will look out for Himself the lamb.* Sept.—*God will see for himself a sheep.* Chald.—*There will be revealed before God for himself a lamb.* The faithful father could only put his son upon the same Divine trust with himself. It was no "evasive answer." This were unworthy of the hero. He can only point his son to God whose sovereignty is gracious, and whose grace is sovereign. This is the granite pillar of his own hope. And they who will have no such strong meat of the Bible doctrine can have no such "strong consolations." (Heb. 5: 14.) The term here rendered *provide* is the same as in the name of the place given by Abraham, *Jehorah-jireh—God will see.* This heroic answer of the father of the faithful strengthened the confidence of the son and of himself. *So they went both of them together.* We may see the love of God in giving up his Son for a sacrifice, here represented. (John 3: 16.)

8 And Abraham said, My son, God will provide himself a lamb for a burnt-offering: so they went both of them together.

9 And they came to a place which God had told him of; and Abraham built an altar there, and laid the wood in order; and bound Isaac his son, and ^elaid him on the altar upon the wood.

10 And Abraham stretched forth his hand, and took the knife to slay his son.

11 And the Angel of the Lord called unto him out of heaven, and said Abraham, Abraham. And he said, Here *am* I.

e Heb. 11: 17; Jam. 2: 21.

9. *A place.* Heb.—*The place.* (vs. 3 and 4.) At length they have come to the spot where the deed is to be done, where Abraham is to be tried, and where God also is to be proved. The father of the faithful and the faithful covenant God are to be revealed. In good faith he builds the altar and proceeds with the work. Then came the act which disclosed the plan and solved the mystery to Isaac, if indeed he had not yet been informed of the fact. *He bound Isaac.* Here is also the proving of Isaac's faith. Has he indeed trusted God to provide the lamb? Then what if God choose him for the victim? We hear no complaint from the son of promise. "He was led as a lamb to the slaughter"—for a voluntary death, so far as we can judge from the record. It was not merely filial affection and pious obedience to the parent; it was implicit trust in God, on the ground set forth and accepted; that God will see—see to it and provide. ¶ *Laid him on the altar upon the wood.* We see no resistance. We see in him the unresisting Son of God—Lamb of God—Sacrifice for sinners. Isaac on the altar was sanctified for his vocation in connection with the history of salvation. He was dedicated there as the first-born, and "the dedication of the first-born, which was afterwards enjoined in the law, was fulfilled in him."

10. Abraham comes now to the point of actually slaying his son; even so far as to raise the fatal knife. So far as his heart and his intent are concerned, he has shown the deed virtually done. Paul shows that it was so regarded by God. (Heb. 11: 17.) "By faith Abraham when he was tried *offered up Isaac.*" God judgeth not according to the outward appearance, but looketh on the heart. It is not the act so much as the will and the purpose of heart, which God regards. He will take the will for the deed, but never the deed for the will. In His Divine judgment the deed was done as truly as if the knife had been plunged into the heart of Isaac. There is therefore no such contradiction here as some critics pretend to find. God required the sacrifice of Isaac, and it was not withheld. Instead of raising him from the dead, he arrested the hand in the act of slaying him.

11. The names of God here introduced are worthy of note. It was *Ha Elohim—the God*—who demanded the sacrifice; the *Personal God* in distinction from heathen gods—the God whom Abraham worshipped and served. And now it was the *Angel of Jehorah—the Covenant Angel*—who arrested him in the very act. God, as God—as the true God—had the sovereign right to demand all that Abraham had; and yet God Jehovah, as the Covenant God,

12 And he said, ^fLay not thine hand upon the lad, neither do thou any thing unto him: for ^gnow I know that thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son, from me.

13 And Abraham lifted up his eyes, and looked, and behold, behind *him* a ram caught in a thicket by his horns: and Abraham went and took the ram, and offered him up for a burnt-offering in the stead of his son.

f 1 Sam. 15: 22; Mic. 6: 7, 8. g ch. 26: 5; Jam. 2: 22.

would not suffer His covenant to fail. These are the different aspects in which God was revealed to the patriarch in the history of redemption. God does not contradict Himself, even though to our poor, feeble view He may seem to do so.

12. *Lay not*, etc. The Angel of Jehovah, who is elsewhere called "*Jehovah*," now interposes for Isaac's deliverance. He has not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them. He declares the ends of God's trial fulfilled, and He interposes at the very critical moment. This is also the province of the Covenant Angel in the whole work of redemption, to interpose for salvation, to furnish a fit substitution, and, in the very article of threatened destruction, to bring life, as from the dead, to the *sons of promise*. ¶ *For now I know that fearing God art thou*. He was regarded as having offered up his son, since he had not withheld him, but had freely given him up to the sacrifice at God's command. This *fear* is reverential, filial fear. (1 Pet. 1: 17.)

13. Here occurs the wonderful substitution, in which God set forth as in a figure the plan of the Mosaic economy for the offering of animal victims instead of human sacrifices—the blood of bulls and of goats instead of human blood—animal-offerings for the sins of men; pointing forward to the only acceptable substitute whom they foreshadowed, who is God's Lamb and not man's—the Lamb of

God's providing, and from his own bosom, His only-begotten and well-beloved Son;—*the man—the God-man*. Abraham had by faith already laid hold of the great truth, "*God will provide Himself the Lamb*," and here he finds it according to his faith. Heb.—*Lo, behind, a ram entangled in the thicket by his horns*. "If therefore the appointment of Moriah as the scene of the sacrifice of Isaac and the offering of a ram in his stead were primarily only typical in relation to the significance and intent of the Old Testament institution of sacrifice, this type already pointed to the Antitype to appear in the future, when the eternal love of the heavenly Father would perform what it had demanded of Abraham, that is to say, would not spare His only Son, but give Him up to the real death which Isaac suffered only in spirit, that we also might die with Christ spiritually, and rise with him to everlasting life." (Rom. 6: 5; 8: 32, etc.)—*Keil and Delitzsch*. ¶ *In the stead of his son*. The animal victims of the law foreshadowed Christ, and He at length puts an end to them by offering Himself. And, as the animal victim was offered *instead of* Isaac, even so Jesus takes the very sacrificial place of the sinner, and gives Himself up an offering and a sacrifice to God, for a sweet-smelling savor. At length he says, "Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not, which are offered by the law.

14 And Abraham called the name of that place Jehovah-jireh: at it is said to this day, In the mount of the LORD it shall be seen.

15 ¶ And the angel of the LORD called unto Abraham out of heaven the second time,

16 And said, ^hBy myself have I sworn, saith the LORD, for because thou hast done this thing, and hast not withheld thy son, thine only son;

^h Ps. 105: 9; Luke 1: 73; Heb. 6: 13, 14.

Then said I, Lo I come to do thy will, O God." The apostle tells us (Heb. 11) that Abraham rested on God's ability to raise Isaac from the dead, and that in a figure he was so raised from death, and so the resurrection of Jesus was set forth.

14. *Jehovah-jireh*. Heb.—*Jehovah will see*, that is, according to vs. 8, *Jehovah will provide*. Sept.—*The Lord hath seen*. ¶ *As it is said*—"So that it is said, (men are still accustomed to say.) *On the mountain where the Lord appears (yearly)*, from which the name *Moriah* arose."—Keil and Delitzsch. Heb.—*In the Mount of the Lord one shall be seen*.—Kalisch. "*In the Mount of the Eternal it shall be seen*."—Benisch. The verb means *He or it shall be seen, or shall appear* (fut. Niphal). Sept.—"In the mount the Lord hath been seen." It is doubtful whether this refers to a proverb in Israel based on this event, as it is found in other languages. *Man's extremity is God's opportunity*. More probably it refers to the locality which was thus divinely designated as the place for Jehovah's appearing as the Shekinah or visible Presence, which should dwell in the sanctuary to be erected in after ages there, in connection with the ritual system of animal sacrifices preparatory to the offering of the Lamb of God. *In the Mount of Jehovah (the Holy Mount), He shall appear (be seen)*; that is, that God shall manifest Himself in the sanctu-

ary, and especially that *One shall appear* on that Holy Mount. (Matt. 3.) He whom the Shekinah of His visible Presence should symbolize in the sanctuary, would appear as the Personal Manifestation of God, the Angel of the Covenant. Gr.—*In the mount it* (that Vicarious Sacrifice) *shall be seen to, or provided (providing Himself the Lamb)*. The Lamb of God will be provided for sacrifice on Mount Moriah. Is not this the distinct revelation to Abraham of Christ's day, which he saw and was glad? Is not this the meaning of the name which he here gives to the place—*In the Mount of Jehovah He will be seen*? (So Isa. 60: 2; Ps. 84: 7.) And is not this the express reference which our Lord Himself makes, when He says, "Your father Abraham rejoiced that he should see my day (the day of my appearing.) HE SAW IT, and was glad"?

15-18. *The second time*. Here we find the covenant promise repeated to Abraham, much the same as at first, yet with important variations. It is the same spiritual grant which the apostle designates as God's "preaching beforehand the Gospel unto Abraham, saying In thee shall all nations be blessed," (Gal. 3: 8; Rom. 4: 16, 17.) It is the promise of salvation to all nations through Abraham. Only here (1.) it is the promise made with the additional sanction of *the oath* of God—that by two im-

17 That in blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed ⁱas the stars of the heaven, ^kand as the sand which *is* upon the sea-shore; and ^lthy seed shall possess ^mthe gate of his enemies;

18 ⁿAnd in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; ^obecause thou hast obeyed my voice.

ⁱ ch. 15: 5; Jer. 33: 22. ^k ch. 13: 16. ^l ch. 24: 60. ^m Mic. 1: 9. ⁿ ch. 12: 3, and 18: 18, and 26: 4; Acts 3: 25; Gal. 3: 8, 9, 16, 18. ^o ver. 3: 10; ch. 26: 5.

mutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have strong consolation, who have fled for refuge. (Heb. 6: 18.) "*By myself have I sworn.*" The apostle explains. "An oath for confirmation, is to men an end of all strife. Wherein God willing more abundantly to show unto the heirs of promise the immutability of His counsel confirmed it by an oath." (Heb. 6: 13. See the oath referred to, ch. 17: 7; 26: 3; 50: 24; Exod. 13: 5, 11.) (2.) It is here expressed that the salvation for all people is to come through the *seed* of Abraham; whereas, in ch. 12: 3, it was "*In thee,*" etc. This was fitting, after the offering of Isaac, which brought the promised seed to view so distinctly. The Apostle Paul argues, by the Spirit, that "*the seed*" is CHRIST. The prediction and promise here given is, therefore, the very crown of all promises—as Abraham is father of the faithful. Luther observes that all that is said in Ps. 89: 36; 132: 11; 110: 4, respecting the oath given to David, is founded upon this sworn promise. For in Nathan's promise to David, which is the immediate basis of the Messianic Psalms, nothing is said about an oath. "The sure mercies of David" are founded on this transaction. (3.) This concluding, crowning form of the promise to Abraham dwells chiefly upon the *Seed*; while, in other passages, it had been the *land* of promise more especially, and Abraham more personally. This is quite in accordance with the gradual

unfolding of Gospel Revelation. The Messianic idea is more and more distinctly brought to view. The *multiplying of the seed* of Abraham here promised, to one who had now, in his old age, only the first-born of Hagar and Sarah, looks beyond mere natural posterity to the spiritual progeny, which should become innumerable—like the *stars* and the *sand*. This shows the historical reality. ¶ *Thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies.* Sept.—*Shall inherit the cities of their adversaries.* This also looks beyond the national power of the Jewish people, and refers to the conquest of the church, of which it is said that "the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." (Matt. 16: 18.) But as Jesus Christ was to come of this Abrahamic line, so the ultimate reference is to Him, and herein is couched the precious promise of the Saviour of mankind. OBSERVE.—There were ten revelations to Abraham. Six of them contain the promise of the Covenant Seed and of the Covenant Land. The remaining four are confined to the SEED, and the great blessing therein contained.

18. *Be blessed.* Here it is the *Hithpael* form of the verb which means *Shall count themselves blessed.* In Genesis 12: 2 (the first form of the promise) it is the *Niphal*—*Shalt be blessed.* And this later form is perhaps stronger. This blessing, therefore, sums up and embodies all the previous revelations of the coming Messiah—as to Adam, of a bruiser of the serpent, and to Noah, of the

19 So Abraham returned unto his young men, and they rose up,

blessings of Jehovah upon Shem, and upon Japhet through him. And so the promise points forward so as to compass all the blessings of the New Testament times for all nations. **OBSERVE.**—"What God had, at the outset, granted out of free grace alone, and unconditionally, He now confirms as the reward of Abraham's act of faith. This faith which he had created, fostered and proved, had now brought forth its fruits. God first promises, and by His revelation awakens faith in the heart. He then crowns with reward the works of this faith which is the result of His grace."—*Gerlach*. The faith of Abraham is cited in the New Testament as most eminent and exemplary; for he was called to believe where in the nature of the case he could not live to see the fulfilment. "*He patiently endured*," therefore, and thus "obtained the promise" in the germ, which could be realized only long after his death. The promise was indeed rather realized to his patient endurance of faith. The ten Theophanies to Abraham are (1.) In Mesopotamia, Acts 7: 2. (2.) At Sichem, Gen. 12: 7. (3.) At Bethel, ch. 13; 14. (4-8.) At Mamre, ch. 15: 1; 17: 1; 18: 1; 21: 12; 22: 1. (9-10.) At Moriah, ch. 22; 11, 15. —All within a period of about fifty years. Though computations of the population of the globe in the early times are conjectural, Prof. C. F. Keil has calculated that taking an average of *eight* children to a marriage, there must have been about twenty-five millions of people; or taking an average of *ten* children, there must have been a sum total of two hundred and ninety-three millions, and this without including such of the earlier generations as would be still living from Shem's time.—Vol. I. p. 178. **OBSERVE.**—The promise to

Abraham is the **THIRD** great patriarchal promise, and it is made to the **THIRD** head of the race. Noah's prediction of blessings upon Shem, and through Shem upon Japhet, is here taken up and expanded. To this Shemite a further Messianic promise is made, when even the line of Shem had become idolatrous. The great point of the promise is (1.) That blessings should come upon the whole human family through Abraham's seed. Abraham must have understood (1.) That these blessings were spiritual, and that it was by the diffusion of the true religion that he should become such a universal blessing. So Peter explains the promise that it was fulfilled in the advent and work of Christ. (Acts 3: 25, 26.) Paul declares that in this promise God preached beforehand the Gospel unto Abraham, saying, etc. (Gal. 3: 8-16.) The promise is therefore (2.) Of a universal religion for man, to come through Abraham. This is the great idea of the Bible. The unity of the race and their brotherhood in Christ, the seed of Abraham, is set forth in both Testaments,—Christ all and in all. (3.) This glorious result for men is by means of a chosen family and people, who are to train a posterity according to the covenant seal. Christianity did not spring out of Judaism as a natural growth, for the Jewish religion had become corrupt, and so it battled the idea of such a universal Church as Christ came to establish. The idea was of God, and the plan thus prosecuted, can be accounted for only as the plan of God, running through the ages, and the golden thread in all history. No heathen philosophy, nor any other religious system ever proposed this spiritual blessedness of mankind as the object and end.

19. Abraham has God for his fath-

and went together to ^pBeersheba; and Abraham dwelt at Beersheba.

20 ¶ And it came to pass after these things, that it was told Abraham, saying, Behold, ^aMilcah, she hath also borne children unto thy brother Nahor;

21 ^rHuz his first-born, and Buz his brother, and Kemuel the father ^s of Aram,

22 And Chesed, and Hazo, and Pildash, and Jidlaph, and Bethuel.

23 And ^tBethuel begat ^uRebekah: these eight Milcah did bear to Nahor, Abraham's brother.

24 And his concubine, whose name *was* Reumah, she bare also Tebah, and Gaham, and Thahash, and Maachah.

p ch. 21: 31. q ch. 11: 29. r Job 1: 1. s Job 32: 2. t ch. 24: 15. u Called in Rom. 9: 10, *Rebecca*.

er and covenant portion, and is recognized as his *friend*, while he yet has Isaac, because he gave him up at God's command. We have our possessions most securely ours when we resign them to God. We never enjoy their full benefit till we make them His. It is when we seek to keep them back from Him that we lose them altogether or lose the real enjoyment of them. "He that saveth his life shall lose it, and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it."

20. The genealogy, which was broken off at chap. 11: 29, is here resumed.

21-24. This family register of Abraham's brother is here inserted to prepare the way for the narrative of Isaac's marriage. This was now the next step for the Covenant Son. And it was God's expressed will that the house of Abraham should not intermarry with the heathen. Here then is *Rebekah* the daughter of *Bethuel*. ¶ *Huz*, (*Uz*.) Job's land (Job, 1: 1.) was so named. (But see ch. 10: 23; 36: 28.) ¶ *Buz*. An ancestor of Elihu who is called *the Buzite*, (Job 32: 2.) ¶ *The father of Aram*. Aram is the name for Syria. ¶ *Chesed*. The Chaldeans are the *Kasdim*.

(See Gen. 11: 28.) We find the same names in different families as now. *Kemuel* was the founder of the family of *Ram*, not of the Arameans. Compare 2 Kings 8: 29 with 2 Chron. 22: 5. This *Chesed* was not the founder of the Chasdim, for they were older than this one. Some suppose he founded one branch of the Chasdim, probably those who stole Job's camels, (Job 1: 17.) Nahor's twelve sons were not the founders of as many tribes, though some have so alleged. ¶ *His concubine*. This was a *halfwife*, such as was not regarded as unlawful at that time, but is pronounced a criminal relation in the light of Christianity. In the East, a concubine is subordinate to the wife. Among the Hebrews, while polygamy was practised, the concubine held a definite position,—could be sent away without a bill of divorce, and yet the relation was not understood as illegitimate,—the family of the concubine was supplementary to that of the wife, and their names occur in the patriarchal genealogies as here. It ought to be remarked that the natural desire of offspring was in the Jew consecrated into a religious hope, which tended to redeem con-

CHAPTER XXIII.

AND Sarah was an hundred and seven and twenty years old: *these were the years of the life of Sarah.*

2 And Sarah died in ^a Kirjath-arba; the same is ^b Hebron in the land of Canaan: and Abraham came to mourn for Sarah, and to weep for her.

a Josh. 14: 15; Judg. 1: 10. b ch. 13: 18; ver. 19.

cubinage from the debasement into which the grosser motives for its adoption might have brought it." Such was the case in the family of Nahor, Abraham and Jacob, and in the latter two cases the offspring was regarded as that of the wife herself by a process analogous to that of adoption. Gerlach says, We see how much was allowable in the Old Testament "on account of the hardness of heart," which, after the full revelation of the mystery of love in redemption, was no longer permitted. (See Exod. 21: 9, 10; Levit. 19: 21; Jud. 19: 2.)

CHAP. XXIII.

§ 45. DEATH OF SARAH. PURCHASE OF BURIAL-PLACE.

The death of Sarah and the purchase of a family burial-ground for her interment are recorded in this chapter. This chapter gives us the first record of property in land, of purchase, of silver as money, and of mourning for the dead, and of burial. (1.) Sarah's age is here given—the only instance in which the Scripture mentions the age of a woman. She is thus distinguished as a pattern woman, (1 Pet. 3: 6.) and as the mother of the Hebrew people, and as being the mother of Isaac, in whom the promised seed was most notably set forth. Isaac was now thirty-seven years old, and Sarah died thirty-eight years before Abraham ¶ *Years of the life.* (Heb. pl. *lives*)

This plural form is commonly used for life in the Heb., but has been thought here and in some other cases, to refer to eminent life, as the *plural of eminence*. Some of the Jewish interpreters refer the expression to three stages in the life of Sarah. (2.) *Kirjath-Arba*. Lit.—*City of Arba*—who is called the father of Anak or of the Anakim, who were giants. (See Josh. 14: 15; 15: 13.) ¶ *Hebron* is the same city. Here Abraham had resided, and, having been absent some forty years, had returned, and now was called to bury Sarah in the city of his earlier abode. This was a most ancient city, "the earliest seat of civilized life," having been built seven years before *Zoan*, the old capital of Egypt, (Num. 13: 22.) It is now a town of some prominence, but chiefly notable for the mosque built over the tomb of Sarah. ¶ *In the land of Canaan*—as Beersheba, where they lately resided, was in the land of the Philistines. Hebron is finely situated in the hill country of Judea, about thirty miles south of Jerusalem. As we entered it we rode through a long arbor of quince-trees in full blossom, while the large grape-clusters just fully formed indicated what enormous specimens of this fruit the spies might have found. We rode up the steep, rocky slope overlooking the town, so as to get the best view of the mosque which rises from its base, and of the enclosure which is walled high around, and which then could not by

3 ¶ And Abraham stood up from before his dead, and spake unto the sons of Heth, saying,

4 ° I *am* a stranger and a sojourner with you : ^d give me a possession of a burying-place with you, that I may bury my dead out of my sight.

5 And the children of Heth answered Abraham, saying unto him,

c ch. 17 : 8 ; 1 Chron. 29 : 15 ; Ps. 105 : 12 ; Heb. 11 : 9, 13. d Acts 7 : 5.

any means be entered by Christians. Since that time Dean Stanley, with the Prince of Wales and his suite have been allowed to enter, in April, 1862, (See Stanley's lectures on the Jewish Church, p. 535. etc.,) ¶ *Came to mourn.* This *coming* does not imply absence at the time of her death, but rather is a formal mode of statement, as in the next verse, *stood up.* ¶ *To weep.* Lit.—*To bewail her.*

3. *Stood up.* According to the Oriental custom, the mourner was seated on the ground, or prostrated himself in the presence of the corpse, "*before his dead,*" sometimes sitting in sackcloth and throwing ashes upon his head. The time was commonly seven days, but for Jacob it was seventy days. ¶ *The sons of Heth.* These are the Hittites, a Canaanite tribe in the neighborhood of Hebron. (Ch. 15 : 20, 23.) Ephron was a prince of the tribe, and they were owners of the land there.

4. Abraham's proposition is here stated, (4-9.) ¶ *A stranger and a sojourner.* He was not one of their tribe, but a stranger—and, indeed, though the soil had become his own by covenant of God, yet he here confessed that he was a stranger and a pilgrim in the land, (Heb. 11 : 13.) David refers to this and confesses the same, (Ps. 39 : 11.) Abraham was not unknown to the people, (vs. 6,) but he was of different race, and did not lay any claim here to the soil, but dealt with the people

according to their natural impressions of him, and as if he had no title to the land from God Himself. A *sojourner* he was, as one temporarily residing among them—and not a mere traveller. He had an interest in this city of his earlier abode, and probably may have had his more permanent dwelling here, though his abode was also in Beersheba. (Stanley, p. 38.) His pastoral life made him a wanderer. Hence he had no burial-ground as yet, (Acts 7 : 5,) and the fact of his now seeking to purchase one at this place, shows his ties to be here. His faith in God's covenant of the land is also indicated by this act. ¶ *A possession of a burying-place,* i. e., a permanent family burial-ground. He here simply proposed that they should give him possession of such a ground on terms to be agreed upon, but not as a gift. (See vs. 9.) This proposal to locate his family sepulchre here implies a purpose to make the country his permanent abode. (See Isa. 22 : 16.) ¶ *My dead.* Not Sarah alone, but the dead of his household hereafter, as well. The Jewish custom was to bury in tombs excavated in the rock, and also to bury in graves. (Matt. 27 : 52, 60.)

5, 6. *Mighty prince.* Lit.—*A prince of God.* So great mountains and cedars are called "*mountains and cedars of God.*" (Ch. 30 : 8 ; Ps. 80 : 10.) The meaning here is a Divine prince, as we would say, or one highly favored of God. Abraham was called

6 Hear us, my lord; thou art ° a mighty prince among us: in the choice of our sepulchres bury thy dead: none of us shall withhold from thee his sepulchre, but that thou mayest bury thy dead.

7 And Abraham stood up and bowed himself to the people of the land, *even* to the children of Heth.

8 And he communed with them, saying, If it be your mind that I should bury my dead out of my sight, hear me, and entreat for me to Ephron the son of Zohar,

9 That he may give me the cave of Machpelah, which he hath, which *is* in the end of his field; for as much money as it is worth he shall give it me, for a possession of a burying-place amongst you.

ch. 13: 2, and 14: 14 and 24: 35.

“the friend of God,” and so called by the people besides being so in fact. Hebron is hence called *El Khalil*, *The Friend*. ¶ *Among us*. Lit.—*In the midst of us*. ¶ *In the choice of our sepulchres*. You shall have the *choice of them* for your purpose, that is of the sites, or of the excavations already made. The offer is repeated—*None of us shall withhold from thee his sepulchre*. They should all stand ready to yield up to him whatever site or sepulchre he should choose.

7. *Bowed himself*. The patriarch stood up and bowed himself in token of reverence or respectful obligation. The term is that which is commonly used to denote religious worship, as that was performed in the attitude of bowing to the ground, sometimes in prostration of the body, or kneeling and bowing the head to the ground. We have seen the sheikh of an encampment come out, as we were passing the tents, and make this low and reverent act of obeisance, as the salutation.

8. *Communed with them*. Lit.—*Spake with them*—had conference with them. *If it be your mind*. Lit.—*If it be with your soul*. Vulg.—*If it please your soul*. Gr.—*If ye have in your soul*. ¶ *Entreat for me to (with) Ephron*. Intercede for me. Ephron, the son of Zohar was

a chief among them, who owned this cave which he desired.

9. *Machpelah*. The term means *double*—a *double cave* as it is. The name applied to the whole plot or field including the cave, and sometimes is limited to the cave itself. The mosque now built over the spot is at the base of a rocky slope looking toward the plain of Mamre, and thus in view of Abraham's encampment. The building was originally a Christian Church, as its structure shows, and was at a later time converted into a mosque. Within the walls are the sacred shrines, or monuments of the patriarchal family in honor of the dead who are buried beneath. A chapel is built around each of these tombs, and is entered through a gateway of the railing, as in modern cathedrals. There are six shrines: those of Abraham and Sarah, the first pair, are in the inner portico,—the former in a recess to the right, the latter to the left, both closed by silver gates. “The chamber is cased in marble. The so-called tomb is a sarcophagus about six feet in height, built up of plastered stone or marble, and hung with three carpets of green and gold. Further on, and within the walls of the mosque, are the shrines of Isaac and Rebekah, with less style, while those of Jacob and Leah are in a

10 And Ephron dwelt among the children of Heth. And Ephron the Hittite answered Abraham in the audience of the children of Heth, *even* of all that ^fwent in at the gate of his city, saying,

11 ^gNay, my lord, hear me: the field give I thee, and the cave that *is* therein, I give it thee; in the presence of the sons of my people give I it thee: bury thy dead.

12 And Abraham bowed down himself before the people of the land.

f ch. 34: 20, 24; Ruth 4: 4. g See 2 Sam. 24: 21-24.

separate cloister opposite the entrance of the mosque. All these are what the Biblical narrative would lead us to expect, and there is the evidence that the Mohammedans have carefully guarded these sacred spots, and they stand as the confirmation of our Christian faith. The mosque is called the Great Haram." (See *Stanley, Hist. of Jew. Chh.* p. 546.) ¶ *End of his field.* At one extremity of his ground. ¶ *For.* Lit.—*In*, or *with full silver*. For the full weight of silver—as much as it is worth without deduction, or so much as he shall value it at, or ask. These were the definite and fair terms upon which Abraham would get possession of the ground. This is the first account we have of property in land and of purchase of land with money. We see (vs. 15, 16) that the silver was weighed out till it reached the full weight or price.

10. *Ephron dwelt.* Gr.—*Sat* in the midst, etc. He was now in confidence with the sons of Heth, in the gate of the city. These Hittites had brought about an interview as had been requested by Abraham. *Ephron answered.* He here makes formal reply to Abraham's proposal to buy at a fair price or at the fixed valuation. This answer was publicly made. Such bargains and contracts were commonly transacted at the city gate before the elders or chief men of the city as witnesses. It was

here also in the audience of all who passed to and fro through the gate, so that it would be most public and formal. It was desirable that it should be well known, and this mode would have the advantage which is obtained in our time by entering such a transfer of land upon the public records.

11. Ephron proposes to donate the land. This, however, was probably only after the Oriental fashion of declining a price, the rather to put one under greater obligation, and expecting a full equivalent, either in money or in service. We have often found among the people a refusal to name a fixed price, especially for any service done, expecting more by putting it upon your honor. Besides, it is in true Oriental style to pretend to the greatest liberality, which you find to be only an exaggerated manner of speech. Ephron expressed himself as willing to be bound by this free offer, "*in the presence of these witnesses.*" Abraham being known as rich and powerful, there was the greater motive with Ephron to waive a fixed price.

12. *Abraham, etc.* The patriarch bows himself in token of reverence and of obligation for so generous a proposal. He, however, prefers to have a regular business transaction. This would be more safe. It would save any hard feeling, and would make the title sure.

13 And he spake unto Ephron in the audience of the people of the land, saying, But if thou *wilt give it*, I pray thee hear me: I will give thee money for the field: take *it* of me, and I will bury my dead there.

14 And Ephron answered Abraham, saying unto him,

15 My lord, hearken unto me: the land *is worth* four hundred ^h shekels of silver: what *is* that betwixt me and thee? bury therefore thy dead.

16 And Abraham hearkened unto Ephron, and Abraham ⁱ weighed to Ephron the silver, which he had named in the audience of the sons of Heth, four hundred shekels of silver current *money* with the merchant.

17 ¶ And ^k the field of Ephron which *was* in Macpelah, which *was* before Mamre, the field and the cave which *was* therein, and all the trees that *were* in the field, that *were* in all the borders round about, were made sure

^h Exod. 30: 15; Ezek. 45: 12. ⁱ Jer. 32: 9. ^k ch. 25: 9, and 49: 30, 31, 32, and 50: 13; Acts 7: 16.

13. *If thou (wilt give it)*. Lit.—*Would that thou—would that thou wouldst hear me*. This abrupt and repeated form expresses his strong desire of having the price fixed for a regular purchase; intimating that otherwise he could not take it, and must decline to accept it as a gift.

14, 15. Lit.—*The land is four hundred shekels*, etc. This is still a common phrase among us. The land *is* so much—is worth so much. ¶ *Shekels*. English—*Scales*. This term is from the verb *shakal*, to weigh, and originally applied to a weight, and afterwards to a coin in use among the Jews. The *shekel* as a fixed value is first mentioned here, though the weight was in common use before this time. It is estimated at nine pennyweights and three grains, which would make about two hundred and twenty-five dollars for the field. ¶ *What is that?* Still keeping up the show of gratuity, he speaks of the price as of no account, as merely nominal, and not to be pressed between such friends, and that he need not delay the burial for

the payment, but might proceed at once without this formality. This air of generosity, however, would be greatly misunderstood, if the speaker should be taken at his word.

16. *Weighed*. It was not coined money, but so much in *weight*, the original sense of *shekel*. ¶ *Current*. It is still the custom to weigh money at the East, even where it is stamped. The merchant in the bazaar has his scales fastened to his girdle. The chief coin in the cities is now the gold Turkish coin (mejhidi) which is weighed as the English sovereign or French Napoleon is weighed often at our banks, to see if it is *the full weight*,—to see if it is current with the merchants, whether it will pass for so much. The tribes of Canaan were among the earliest merchants. ¶ *Merchant*. The term means *traveller*, and refers to the travelling merchants, who carried their goods as in caravans from country to country for sale.

17. The property was now formally transferred. The ground, including all that was upon it, the cave and

18 Unto Abraham for a possession in the presence of the children of Heth, before all that went in at the gate of his city.

19 And after this, Abraham buried Sarah his wife in the cave of the field of Machpelah, before Mamre; the same *is* Hebron in the land of Canaan.

20 And the field, and the cave that *is* therein ¹were made sure unto Abraham for a possession of a burying-place, by the sons of Heth.

¹ See Ruth 4: 7, 8, 9, 10; Jer. 32: 10, 11.

the trees, were made sure, and it was used for a family burial-ground. Abraham and Sarah, Isaac and Rebekah, Jacob and Leah were buried there. (See ch. 49: 31.) ¶ *Mamre*. Hebron was in the plains of Mamre, and the city often bears this name, (vs. 19.) We turned aside from the main road out of Hebron to visit the ancient oak which is pointed out, in the centre of a large field, as the oak under which Abraham pitched his tent. The plains around Hebron are in fine cultivation. The people are more civilized in appearance, but have the repute of being more ferocious and wicked than the average of the people. ¶ *Were made sure*. Lit.—*Stood for a possession*. No deed is here spoken of. What the further formal guarantee may have been does not appear—whether there was any instrument of writing, or only a public proclamation in the gate that the sale was completed. This latter seems to be intimated in this verse. But undisputed tenure was acknowledged as a title. The purchase of this burial-place was Abraham's public confession of faith in the Divine promise of the land to him.

19. *After this*. Probably meaning that as soon as the transaction was thus closed, Abraham proceeded to bury Sarah. This proceeding was the public assertion and admission of his claim to the cave and the field.

20. The confirmation of his title is here repeated. It was a most important step and a great fact in the history. Abraham, as father of the faithful—he to whom the holy land had been promised in covenant—thus declared his faith in the promise, and buried his dead on the soil, to commend his faith to his descendants. ¶ *Were made sure*—the same term as in vs. 17, but here in the Greek rendered *was confirmed*. “It stood” is also expressive, as we say *it stood in his name*, or the transaction *stood*. The mosque, *Al Haram*, as we saw it, has one minaret on each of two oblique corners of the walled inclosure. The walls, as seen from the filthy, narrow streets, are high, solid, and ancient in appearance, having the old bevelled bordering. As seen from the hill, the building proper occupies only a third or fourth part of the enclosure, and stands at one corner. On one side of the outer walls are eight pilasters and two buttresses, and on the other side are twelve pilasters and two buttresses. The masonry bears all the marks of most ancient Jewish architecture, and *Robinson* is confident that it was erected before the downfall of the nation. *Josephus*' account agrees with this view. For a diagram of this noble monument of sacred antiquity, see *Stanley's Lectures on the Jewish Church*, p. 542.

CHAPTER XXIV.

AND Abraham ^a was old *and* well stricken in age: and the LORD ^b had blessed Abraham in all things.

2 And Abraham said unto his ^c eldest servant of his house, that ^d ruled over all that he had, ^e Put, I pray thee, thy hand under my thigh:

3 And I will make thee ^f swear by the LORD, the God of heaven and the God of the earth, that ^g thou shalt not take a wife unto

a ch. 18: 11, and 21: 5. b ch. 13: 2; ver. 35; Ps. 112: 3; Prov. 10: 22. c ch. 15: 2. d ver. 10: ch. 39: 4, 5, 6. e ch. 47: 29; 1 Chron. 29: 24; Lam. 5: 6. f ch. 14: 22; Deut. 6: 13; Josh. 2: 12. g ch. 26: 35, and 27: 46, and 28: 2; Exod. 34: 16; Deut. 7: 3.

CHAPTER XXIV.

§ 46. ISAAC'S MARRIAGE TO REBEKAH.

The death of Sarah left a sad breach in the family of Abraham. He naturally turns his attention to Isaac, the son of promise, in whom his house was to be enlarged, and in the faith of the numerous posterity covenanted to him, he seeks a wife for his son. This was three years after Sarah's death.

1. *Was old and well stricken in age.* This is the common phrase for expressing *advanced* years. Lit.—*Old and come in days.* He was now in his hundred and fortieth year. Abraham's prosperity is here noted as of God, and universal.

2. *His eldest servant.* Lit.—*To his servant, the elder of his house*—not meaning the oldest servant, but the terms *servant* and *elder* both denote office. He is also designated as *ruled over all that he had*. The term *servant* is here like the term *minister*, a title of dignity. The confidential head servant or steward in an Oriental household was an important officer, exercising chief authority in all the affairs of the family—next to the patriarch himself. The *elder* was not a title of age but of office. It

passed into the church, and is the only permanent office which has come down to us from the Jewish church. This may have been Eliezer of Damascus, who was Abraham's steward fifty-four years before this and prior to the birth of Ishmael. (Ch. 15: 2.)

2. *To put the hand under one's thigh*, was probably a form of making oath, or giving most solemn pledge to another. We do not read of it elsewhere except only where Jacob requires the same of Joseph. (Ch. 47: 29.) The thigh is the part on which the sword rests, and thus it expresses dominion. "Gird thy sword upon thy thigh." It is also the seat of generation, and so it might refer to the covenant of circumcision. The servant sacredly swore subjection and obedience to his master, by this formal act, with reference to the Divine covenant.

3. Lit.—*I will swear thee.* I will put thee upon oath. ¶ *By the Lord.* Lit.—*By Jehovah.* The redemptive name of God showing the designed reference to the covenant of grace made to Abraham. "Jehovah, the God of the heavens, and the God of the earth" is the arbiter of the destiny, and the one who swears may well fear him. ¶ *Not take a wife to my son.* The father, according to Oriental custom, chose a wife for his son, and made the contract with the pa-

my son of the daughters of the Canaanites among whom I dwell :

4 ^h But thou shalt go ⁱ unto my country, and to my kindred, and take a wife unto my son Isaac.

5 And the servant said unto him, Peradventure the woman will not be willing to follow me unto this land : must I needs bring thy son again unto the land from whence thou camest ?

6 And Abraham said unto him, Beware thou, that thou bring not my son thither again.

7 ¶ The LORD God of heaven, which ^k took me from my father's house, and from the land of my kindred, and which spake unto me, and that sware unto me, saying, ^l Unto thy seed will I give this land : ^m he shall send his angel before thee, and thou shalt take a wife unto my son from thence.

h ch. 28 : 2. i ch. 12 : 1. k ch. 12 : 1, 7. l ch. 12 : 7, and 13 : 15 ; and 15 : 18 ; and 17 : 8 ; Exod. 32 : 13 ; Deut. 1 : 8, and 34 : 4 ; Acts 7 : 5. m Exod. 23 : 20, 23, and 33 : 2 ; Heb. 1 : 14.

rent of the bride. Here the patriarch was about to send his chief steward on this errand, and he would first of all make him swear that he would not take a Canaanitish woman for Isaac. This oath would be the more important if Abraham should suddenly die before the wife was chosen.

¶ *The Canaanites* were the heathen tenants of the land, whom God had ordained to be exterminated. And Abraham would not have his covenant son become allied to this uncovenanted and wicked people, and thus alienate the household from God. He was not to be unequally yoked with an unbeliever. (2 Cor. 6 : 14) This godly patriarch would jealously guard his house, and so command his children after him that the Lord might (consistently) bring upon him all that He had promised. (Gen. 18 : 19.)

4. He now instructs his steward as to whither he should go. ¶ *Unto my country.* This was Mesopotamia. Abraham's kindred were Shemites, and had some knowledge of God, though not wholly purged from idolatry. (Ch. 31.) Here Abraham had dwelt for a time after leaving Ur of the Chaldees, and hither the messen-

ger was to go. He was not born here, but in Ur. Isaac was now about forty years old.

5. Before taking this solemn oath, the steward seeks a clear understanding and asks *whether* in the possible event of the maid refusing to leave her country, he should take Isaac thither to her.

6. Abraham answers most positively that on no account would he have Isaac taken to that land to live, however he might desire that his wife should be taken from thence. ¶ *Beware.* Lit.—*Take heed to thyself, lest thou return my son thither ;* that is, lest thou come thence and *take him back* to that land.

7. Abraham here expresses his faith in God's holy covenant as pertaining to this, and insuring the best result. ¶ *The Lord God.* Lit.—*Jehovah, the God of the heavens*, who controls all agents, elements, and events. The same God who called him out of his country to Canaan, and covenanted to give him this land as an inheritance for his posterity. He would so order all the circumstances as to accomplish His promise, and He would therefore so arrange as that the wife for Isaac would come

8 And if the woman will not be willing to follow thee, then ⁿ thou shalt be clear from this my oath; only bring not my son thither again.

9 And the servant put his hand under the thigh of Abraham his master, and sware to him concerning that matter.

10 ¶ And the servant took ten camels, of the camels of his master, and departed; (^e for all the goods of his master *were* in his hand;) and ^p he arose, and went to Mesopotamia, unto the city of Nahor.

n Josh. 2: 17, 20. o ver. 2. p ch. 27: 43.

to the promised land. What beautiful faith in God, that He will secure the ends which He has engaged to bring about, and that we need not worry and ought not to distrust! Let us not suppose that all will go amiss, but rather that all will turn out well, for what God hath promised he is able to perform, and will perform. ¶ *His angel*, or the Covenant Angel. (Ch. 16: 7.) His messenger, by whatever agency should be needed to bring about the result, would go before him.

8. Abraham here releases the steward from the oath, in case the supposed difficulty should occur; for in no case would he consent to have his son taken to that land, to dwell outside of the land of promise. "This oath implies that if Abraham should die, this steward would have an influential position towards Isaac."—*Kurtz*.

9. The servant or steward took the oath to his master, as was directed. ¶ *Sware to him*. Lit.—*Was sworn to him*.

10. The preparation and the journey now follow. He took *ten camels* from the camels of his master. These were for the purpose of carrying the presents for the bride, and provisions for the journey, and such as would also indicate the rank of his master. Besides this they would be needed to bring home the bride and her suite. ¶ *For all the goods*, etc. Lit.—*And all the goods of his master in his hand*.

This is not a reason given for the equipage which he took, but an additional clause as to the goods which he took besides the beasts of burden which were to carry them. The Gr. renders, "*And of all the goods of his lord (he took) with himself.*" So the Vulg.—He took valuable and various presents from his lord's goods, to give to the chosen one who should be the bride. Some of these presents are mentioned in vs. 22 and 53. ¶ *To Mesopotamia*. The Hebrew term means *Aram* (or Syria) *of the two rivers*, that is, of the Tigris and Euphrates—the district lying between the two. This is expressed by the Greek word *Mesopotamia* which means, *midst of the rivers*. The entire island tract is about seven hundred miles long, and from twenty-five to two hundred and fifty miles broad. But the region specially meant in the Scripture is the north-western portion of this tract, lying between the great bend of the Euphrates and the upper Tigris. The towns Orfa and Haran, besides modern cities, are in this district. Here we first hear of Mesopotamia as the country where Nahor was located, after leaving Ur of the Chaldees. He probably accompanied his father Terah to Haran (ch. 11: 31) or else he followed him soon after. Haran is properly in Padan Aram—the flat land of Syria—a portion of Mesopotamia.

11 And he made his camels to kneel down without the city by a well of water, at the time of the evening; *even* the time ^a that women go out to draw *water*;

12 And he said, ^r O LORD, God of my master Abraham, I pray thee, ^s send me good speed this day, and shew kindness unto my master Abraham.

13 Behold, ^t I stand *here* by the well of water; and the ^u daughters of the men of the city come out to draw water:

14 And let it come to pass, that the damsel to whom I shall say, Let down thy pitcher, I pray thee, that I may drink; and she shall say, Drink, and I will give thy camels drink also: *let the same be* she *that* thou hast appointed for thy servant Isaac; and ^w thereby shall I know that thou hast shewed kindness unto my master.

^q Exod. 2: 16. ^r ver. 27; ch. 26: 24, and 28: 13, and 32: 9; Exod. 3: 6, 15. ^s Neh. 1: 11; Ps. 37: 5. ^t ver. 43. ^u ch. 29: 9; Exod. 2: 16. ^w See Judg. 6: 17, 37; 1 Sam. 6: 7, and 14: 10, and 20: 7.

11. The steward came on his journey to the well outside the city, and as it was at the evening, when the public well was resorted to for water by the daughters of the city, (vs. 13,) he halted there, and made his camels *kneel* so as to rest themselves. Lit.—*At the time of the going forth of the female drawers* (of water vs. 13.) This would be his best opportunity for gathering information, and also for seeing the industrious maidens of the city. In Eastern countries this drawing of water is commonly done by the women, who carry their skin bottle or earthen jar on the shoulder or on the head, (John 4: 7,) or sometimes strapped to the shoulder. The Samaritan woman came out for water at noon, but the hour was commonly at morning and evening. We have frequently seen in Palestine, at the public well or fountain, such groups of women filling their pitchers, at evening.

12. The steward now put up a prayer to God, recognizing his dependence on the providential help which he was encouraged to expect. Lit.—*O Jehovah, God of my lord Abraham, cause to occur to me this*

day (what I seek) *and do kindness to my lord Abraham.*

13, 14. He now proposes a sign by which he shall receive the Divine intimation of the person intended for Isaac's bride. He will use the means. He will do his best as to a choice, but he will submit the decision to God. He must have the Divine confirmation of his choice, else he dare not proceed. The whole matter is of utmost importance, to choose a wife for the son of promise, and God will surely give direction at his humble request. 1st. He was to go so far as he could in making the choice. 2d. She must be such an one as will respond cordially to his application for water. She would then have the marks of a good temper, besides the personal attractions of which he could only judge at first sight. Form and feature and healthful aspect, and charms for the eye of which a stranger could judge, were to be seconded by a prompt and hearty response to the request of a stranger for water. (1.) How a little act of kindness will display the disposition! The politeness and culture which will give water to the

15 ¶ And it came to pass, before he had done speaking, that behold, Rebekah came out, who was born to Bethuel, son of ^xMilcah, the wife of Nahor, Abraham's brother, with her pitcher upon her shoulder.

16 And the damsel ^ywas very fair to look upon, a virgin; neither had any man known her: and she went down to the well, and filled her pitcher, and came up.

17 And the servant ran to meet her, and said, Let me, I pray thee, drink a little water of thy pitcher.

18 ^z And she said, Drink, my lord: and she hasted, and let down her pitcher upon her hand, and gave him drink.

x ch. 11: 29; and 22: 23. y ch. 26: 7. z 1 Pet. 3: 8; and 4: 9.

stranger will speak volumes in regard to the character. (2.) How indispensable in a good wife is a good disposition, beyond any mere outward charms. (3.) How requisite, above all, is the approbation of God in so momentous a choice. ¶ *Hast appointed, hast indicated, or demonstrated as the fitting one.*

15. So promptly was the desired sign given, that *before he had done speaking Rebekah was coming forth* from the city towards the well. This well or fountain seems to have been reached by steps. This is often the case. Sometimes an enclosure with a roof marks the spot, the wells being regarded as of great value and worthy of all protection. ¶ *Upon her shoulder.* This was considered as the more graceful way of carrying the pitcher, and when it was empty this was the most natural and common mode.

16. *Very fair, etc.* Lit.—*Good of countenance exceedingly.* ¶ *Went down to the well.* Some suppose that it was a cistern of rain-water. We have seen such cut in the rock above ground, and we have seen wells or fountains reached by a declivity or by steps. He had watched her in this movement, and was clear that she fulfilled all the conditions as to personal manners.

17. As she came up, he ran to meet her, and made his application for a drink of water, as Jesus did of the Samaritan woman. By her answers he was to know whether she was the woman whom God would indicate for the bride, or not.

18. Her response was prompt and cordial. She was bearing her pitcher upon her shoulder, as we suppose, and naturally let it down upon her hand. This civility and courtesy added to the already favorable impression. It happened somewhat differently with us. We came up to a cistern hewn out of the limestone rock, and were very thirsty after a hot ride on the road from Jericho to Jerusalem. The cistern was well supplied with rain-water, covered over with a green scum. Our dragoman let down his skin bucket or bottle by a cord, and drew up the water clear and cool from beneath the surface. He poured it into a cup and was handing it to one of our ladies, when an old sheikh, who had escorted us (at five dollars a head from Jerusalem and back,) seized the cup, demanding to be served before the lady. On his being stoutly refused by our dragoman, he mounted his beast in a surly mood and rode off immediately. It was the last we saw of him.

19 And when she had done giving him drink, she said, I will draw *water* for thy camels also, until they have done drinking.

20 And she hasted, and emptied her pitcher into the trough, and ran again unto the well to draw *water*, and drew for all his camels.

21 And the man, wondering at her, held his peace, to wit whether the ^a LORD had made his journey prosperous or not.

22 And it came to pass, as the camels had done drinking, that the man took a golden ^b ear-ring of half a shekel weight, and two bracelets for her hands of ten *shekels* weight of gold,

23 And said, Whose daughter *art* thou? tell me, I pray thee: is there room *in* thy father's house for us to lodge in?

a ver. 12: 56. b Exod. 32: 2, 3; Isa. 3: 19, 20, 21; Ezek. 16: 11, 12; 1 Pet. 3: 3.

19. She now proceeded quite according to the sign which the steward had named. Everything thus goes forward most satisfactorily. She proposes, in her open-hearted way, to furnish water for his camels also; using even the language which the servant had used in his prayer. This indicated, most clearly, the hand of God in the matter.

20. *Into the trough.* In the vicinity of Nazareth we noticed such a well or fountain with a stone trough filled, and at evening the women were gathered there, filling their stone jars at the well, and carrying them on their heads. The trough would also be a convenience for cattle to drink. Around Jerusalem, Damascus, and Hebron the water is conveyed from pools or reservoirs outside the city, in earthen pipes running under cover, but having openings at intervals, along the roadside, for the cattle to drink. ¶ *Ran again to the well.* Her sprightly, cheerful service was most attractive.

21. And the man *wondering at her.* Gesenius makes this form to be from the verb to *behold*, and being a reflexive form, it would mean *looking about with himself at her*,—expressing an emotion of surprise or wonderment. Delitzsch makes it from a verb meaning *to make a noise*, and then to be in confusion. But he

translates it according to the first form. ¶ *Held his peace.* Lit.—*Keeping silence to know whether Jehovah had prospered his way or not.*

22. *Golden ear-ring.* This ring was more properly a *nose ring*. There was but one—not a pair—and such a ring is worn by the Eastern women, the left nostril being pierced at the side for the purpose. This ring is commonly of gold or silver among the higher ranks, and of poorer material among others. Half a shekel weight was slightly less than a quarter of an ounce. (Exod. 38: 26.) ¶ *Two bracelets for her hands.* These are worn about the wrists, and are heavy and large—not always solid, but very showy. Four ounces and a half would be about the *ten shekels' weight* for the pair. These being of gold would be valuable. The women of Palestine often carry most of their valuables in the shape of trinkets for the arms and legs and hair. We have seen women and children wearing a net-work of coins on their heads. The steward took out of his treasure these articles, to present to her not as a bridal gift, but as a token of his thanks for her service, and as a hint or pledge of special interest in her, looking to something further. Before placing these gifts upon her he first inquires as to her name and home and cir-

24 And she said unto him ^c *I am* the daughter of Bethuel the son of Milcah, which she bare unto Nahor.

25 She said, moreover, unto him, We have both straw and provender enough, and room to lodge in.

26 And the man ^d bowed down his head, and worshipped the LORD.

27 And he said, ^e *Blessed be* the LORD God of my master Abraham, who hath not left destitute my master of ^f his mercy and his truth: *I being* in the way, the LORD ^g led me to the house of my master's brethren.

28 And the damsel ran, and told *them* of her mother's house these things.

29 ¶ And Rebekah had a brother, and his name *was* ^h Laban: and Laban ran out unto the man unto the well.

^c ch. 22: 23. ^d ver. 52; Exod. 4: 31. ^e Exod. 18: 10; Ruth 4: 14; 1 Sam. 25: 32, 39; 2 Sam. 18: 28; Luke 1: 68. ^f ch. 32: 10; Ps. 98: 3. ^g ver. 48. ^h ch. 29: 5.

cumstances. We notice from vs. 30 and 47 that it was not until after he had learned these things, that he placed these ornaments upon her. It was not until then, perhaps, that he felt so assured that she was the intended bride. ¶ *Room*. As there were no public houses for travellers, only at best the *khan* or caravan-serai, and as it was and is still customary for strangers to seek a lodging with the sheikh of a village, this question about accommodations was proper, and not surprising.

24. She promptly told of her family relation; and it proved to be of Abraham's kindred—the daughter of his nephew.

25. In keeping with her cordiality, already shown at the well, is her hospitality, in which she goes beyond his request for lodging, and assures him of straw and provender besides. The *straw* was chopped straw for mixture with *provender*—as grasses and herbage, or barley. The term for *provender*, means *feed* in the general.

26. This venerable steward—Eliezer, as is supposed—thankful for so prompt and gracious an answer to his prayer, bowed himself in a solemn

act of Divine worship. It is *Jehovah*—the covenant name of God—God as the Redeemer, that he adores.

27. The language of his thanksgiving is here recorded. ¶ “*Blessed be Jehovah, the God of my lord Abraham, who hath not left his mercy and his truth from my lord*”—(*hath not left it off*.) “*I in the way, Jehovah hath led me to the house of the brethren of my lord*.” This is true primitive piety. He seeks direction in earnest prayer, and acknowledges the answer in humble, hearty praise. (See vs. 48.)

28. This praise to God was probably offered while Rebekah was running to her home with the exciting news. ¶ *And the damsel ran and told to the house of her mother according to these things*. It would be the female part of the house to whom she would naturally relate all the facts and all her thoughts. How natural the picture! The *mother* and those who cluster around her will first get the interesting news. The family was settled in a fixed abode, as would seem.

29. Here Laban, Rebekah's brother, is introduced. Though parents, at the East, have most to do in ar-

30 And it came to pass, when he saw the ear-ring, and bracelets upon his sister's hands, and when he heard the words of Rebekah his sister, saying, Thus spake the man unto me; that he came unto the man, and behold, he stood by the camels at the well.

31 And he said, Come in, ⁱthou blessed of the LORD; wherefore standest thou without? for I have prepared the house, and room for the camels.

32 ¶ And the man came into the house: and he ungirded his camels, and ^kgave straw and provender for the camels, and water to wash his feet, and the men's feet that *were* with him.

33 And there was set *meat* before him to eat: but he said, ⁱI will not eat until I have told mine errand. And he said, Speak on.

34 And he said, I *am* Abraham's servant.

35 And the LORD ^mhath blessed my master greatly, and he is

ⁱ ch. 26: 29; Judg. 17: 2; Ruth 3: 10; Ps. 115: 15. ^k ch. 43: 24; Judg. 19: 21. ¹ Job 23: 12; John 4: 34; Eph. 6: 5, 6, 7. ^m ver. 1, ch. 13: 2.

ranging for the marriage of a daughter, yet the elder brothers have also much to say, as the natural protectors of their sisters. *Laban*, when he heard the news from Rebekah, or those to whom she had told it, *hastened forth to the man at the well.* (See vs. 50.)

30. The ornaments of gold presented to his sister, and Rebekah's narrative of all the words that had passed between them, deeply impressed him in favor of the stranger, and brought him out to see him. It does not appear that Eliezer had yet told of his master's house, or of his errand.

31. He cordially invites the man to accept the hospitalities of his house. The stranger had spoken of *Jehovah* in his prayer and praise, but not in the hearing of Laban. Yet he calls him "*blessed of Jehovah*," and he either meant by this, that he was evidently one favored of God in his lot, or that he inferred this of him, that he was a worshipper of the true God. A true child of God will show himself to be such. Laban recognizes the hand of *Jehovah*, the covenant God, in the matter, (vs. 50.) ¶ *I have prepared*, etc. All was made ready for the stranger's recep-

tion, and for the camels also. There was no lack of accommodations.

32. At this invitation Eliezer enters the house. ¶ *And he* (Laban) *ungirded the camels.* Lit.—*Unloosed.* It is plain that Laban is to be understood as having unsaddled and unloaded the camels, besides furnishing the provender, water, etc. Everything was supplied for their comfort, in true Oriental hospitality. ¶ *Water for the feet* was a great luxury in that hot, dusty land, and it was a thoughtful piece of attention and civility on Laban's part to have even the attendants supplied. He had a retinue of servants with the camel train.

33. So intent was the steward upon his master's errand that he cared more for it than for his food, and he would not eat until he had told it. The first thing in the reception of an Oriental house is to set something before you to eat and drink. He was invited to tell of his business. ¶ *There was set before him to eat*, or *he* (Laban) *set before him* (food) *to eat.*

34, 35. He states who and whence he is and what is his errand. How startling must have been his an-

become great: and he hath given him flocks, and herds, and silver, and gold, and men-servants, and maid-servants, and camels, and asses.

36 And Sarah, my master's wife, ⁿ bare a son to my master when she was old; and ^o unto him hath he given all that he hath.

37 And my ^p master made me swear, saying, Thou shalt not take a wife to my son of the daughters of the Canaanites, in whose land I dwell:

38 ^a But thou shalt go unto my father's house, and to my kindred, and take a wife unto my son.

39 ^r And I said unto my master, Peradventure the woman will not follow me.

40 ^s And he said unto me, the LORD, ^t before whom I walk, will send his angel with thee, and prosper thy way; and thou shalt take a wife for my son of my kindred, and of my father's house.

41 ^u Then shalt thou be clear from *this* mine oath, when thou comest to my kindred; and if they give not thee *one*, thou shalt be clear from mine oath.

42 And I came this day unto the well, and said, ^v O LORD God

n ch. 21: 2. o ch. 21: 10, and 25: 5. p ver. 3. q ver. 4. r ver. 5. s ver. 7. t ch. 17: 1. u ver. 8. v ver. 12.

nouncement to the family of Bethuel! *I am Abraham's servant. And Jehovah hath blessed my master exceedingly*, etc. He tells of Abraham's prosperity and wealth, and refers all to the hand of his covenant God. Worldly men refer all their increase to their own sagacity, or good fortune at best. They would naturally have thought that Abraham, an emigrant, was poor.

36. He comes now to tell of Isaac. How simple and honest is the narrative! No arts of diplomacy! Isaac was born out of course, as the son of promise, and he was the heir. ¶ *When she was old.* Lit.—*After her old age*—after she had become old, and too old for any such event naturally. Thus they would see how Isaac was a special gift of God. ¶ *All that he hath.* Hagar and Ishmael had been dismissed with their portion, so that Isaac remained his sole heir. (See ch. 25: 5.)

37. He now recites the facts of his

commission under oath for this purpose of getting Isaac a wife from his kindred. ¶ *Made me swear.* Lit.—*Swore me.* It was at his master's bidding that he took the oath.

38. *But thou shalt go.* Lit.—*If thou shalt not go* This is the form of putting one to the oath; understanding that curses should rest upon him if he did not go.

40. *Jehovah before whom I walk*; that is, obediently. “*Walk before me, and be thou perfect,*” (ch. 17: 1.) ¶ *Will send His angel with thee.* Vs. 7—*Before thee.*

41. Here it is formally stated, what was implied in the previous narrative, that Eliezer was cleared or freed from the obligation of his oath in case there should be no success in his mission. ¶ *Clear.* Lit.—*Thou shalt be pure, innocent, free, from my oath* (imposed by me.)

42. He now recites the incident of his meeting with Rebekah in answer to prayer, and how it was according

of my master Abraham, if now thou do prosper my way which I go :

43 ^w Behold I stand by the well of water ; and it shall come to pass, that when the virgin cometh forth to draw *water*, and I say to her, Give me, I pray thee, a little water of thy pitcher, to drink ;

44 And she say to me, Both drink thou, and I will also draw for thy camels : *let* the same *be* the woman whom the LORD hath appointed out for my master's son.

45 ^x And before I had done ^y speaking in mine heart, behold, Rebekah came forth with her pitcher on her shoulder ; and she went down unto the well, and drew *water* : and I said unto her, Let me drink, I pray thee.

46 And she made haste, and let down her pitcher from her *shoulder*, and said, Drink, and I will give thy camels drink also ; so I drank, and she made the camels drink also.

47 And I asked her, and said, Whose daughter *art* thou ? And she said, The daughter of Bethuel, Nahor's son, whom she bare unto him : and I ^z put the ear-ring upon her face, and the bracelets upon her hands.

48 ^a And I bowed down my head, and worshipped the LORD, and blessed the LORD God of my master Abraham, which had led me in the right way to take ^b my master's brother's daughter unto his son.

49 And now if ye will ^c deal kindly and truly with my master,

w ver. 13. x ver. 15, &c. y 1 Sam. 1 : 13. z Ezek. 16 : 11, 12. a ver. 26. b ch. 22 : 23. ch. 47 : 29 ; Josh. 2 : 14.

to a sign that he had asked of God. Thus he shows that he acted under the Divine direction, and that, as would seem, the alliance which he sought for Isaac would have the Divine sanction.

44. *Appointed out.* The same term as is rendered, in vs. 14, *appointed*, meaning *pointed out*—fixed upon as the fitting one.

45. *Speaking in my heart.* Before all the words had even passed in his mind, much less come to his tongue to utter them all, Rebekah came forth.

47. It appears from this passage that Eliezer did not put the ornaments upon her until he had received an answer to his question. ¶ *Upon her face.* This would indicate that

it was a ring for the nose and not for the ear.

48. *In the right way.* Here he adds this additional expression. God's way is *the right way*, (Ps. 107 : 7.) And here he declares that the indication from God Himself was plain that he should take his *master's brother's daughter* for Isaac. Rebekah was rather the *grand-daughter* of Nahor. Thus delicately he states his errand in full, and comes now to the point of *aye or no* for the answer.

49. *And now if ye are* (if it is to you) *doing kindness and truth with my lord, tell me, etc.* And *I will turn* (that I may turn) *to the right hand or to the left* ; that is, he wished their decision, so that, if they should decline his application, he might look

tell me: and if not tell me; that I may turn to the right hand, or to the left.

50 Then Laban and Bethuel answered and said, ^a The thing proceedeth from the LORD: we ^e cannot speak unto thee bad or good.

51 Behold, Rebekah is ^f before thee, take *her*, and go, and let her be thy master's son's wife, as the LORD hath spoken.

52 And it came to pass, that, when Abraham's servant heard their words, he ^g worshipped the LORD, *bowing himself* to the earth.

53 And the servant brought forth ^h jewels of silver, and jewels of gold, and raiment, and gave *them* to Rebekah. He gave also to her brother and to her mother ⁱ precious things.

d Ps. 118 : 23; Matt. 21 : 42; Mark 12 : 11. e ch. 31 : 24. f ch. 20 : 15. g ver. 26. h Exod. 3 : 22, and 11 : 2, and 12 : 35. i 2 Chron. 21 : 3; Ezra 1 : 6.

among other families of that people for a bride to Isaac.

50. The impression was made upon the father and brother of Rebekah, as he desired; namely, that this was God's pleasure. Lit.—*The word goeth forth from Jehovah; we are not able* (we dare not) *to speak unto thee bad or good.* We cannot say anything about it of our own notion, to interfere in the case. (Ch. 31 : 24; Numb. 24 : 13; 2 Sam. 13 : 22.)

51. They give their free consent. ¶ *Let her go.* There is no impediment on their part. In Eastern countries this is the common method of negotiating a marriage. Such an one as this old house-servant goes out on the errand; the parent of the son having the direction to give, as to where he should look and where he should not look for the bride. Or, if a suitable one can be found at hand, as is more common, of course, then the parent fixes upon one that he judges to be suitable, and negotiates with her father and brothers as to the terms. (See Ch. 34 : 5, 25; Judg. 21 : 22; 2 Sam. 13 : 22.) A dowry is commonly given of articles counted valuable, or a fixed price is named. In Egypt one of our guides

told me that he had lately bought a wife cheap, at about thirty dollars in our money; that he had had several which had cost him a larger sum, and they had run off with all that they could take away. A writing is given, and in the farther East a sum is named as the amount to be paid in case of the woman being dismissed with a divorce; and the sum is often made very large, so as to prevent such dismissal. Often the groom, like Isaac, has not seen his bride till she is brought to him, and then he is expected to rejoice greatly. Allusion is made to this custom in John 3 : 29. ¶ *As Jehovah hath spoken.* This family were worshippers of the true God. Such an alliance with God's people Abraham desired for the son of promise.

52. The aged servant piously acknowledged God's goodness in thus favoring his mission.

53. He now brings forth from the valuables which he had taken for the purpose, out of his master's goods, (vs. 10,) and makes the presents to Rebekah—jewels of gold and of silver and raiment also. So Jesus gives gifts to His bride, the church. He then gave gifts to the brother and to

54 And they did eat and drink, he and the men that *were* with him, and tarried all night; and they rose up in the morning, and he said, ^kSend me away unto my master.

55 And her brother and her mother said, Let the damsel abide with us *a few* days, at the least ten; after that she shall go.

56 And he said unto them, Hinder me not, seeing the LORD hath prospered my way: send me away, that I may go to my master.

57 And they said, We will call the damsel, and inquire at her mouth.

58 And they called Rebekah, and said unto her, Wilt thou go with this man? And she said, I will go.

59 And they sent away Rebekah their sister, and ^lher nurse, and Abraham's servant, and his men.

60 And they blessed Rebekah, and said unto her, Thou *art* our sister; be thou ^m*the mother* of thousands of millions, and ⁿlet thy seed possess the gate of those which hate them.

k ver. 56, and 59. l ch. 35: 8. m ch. 17: 16. n ch. 22: 17.

the mother. ¶ *Jewels*. This term means rather *vessels*, and also *articles* of divers sorts. ¶ *Precious things*. The phrase is used sometimes of fruits of the earth.—Deut. 33: 16.

54. He then partook the food set before him (vs. 33.) After remaining all night, he asked to be sent on his way home. The *brother* and the *mother* pleaded for a delay of at least ten days. This was most natural. Here the heart of mother and brother is seen, craving a season of preparation for such a change as the departure of a favorite from the household. ¶ *Days, or ten* (as we say *some days, say ten*.)

56. The servant insisted on going without delay, to report his good success at the earliest moment.

57, 58. They then proposed to inquire of Rebekah if she was willing to go so soon. And she consented. This does not seem to be a question as to her consent to the marriage. The contract was lawfully concluded by the parent. It was understood to be right and proper. Besides, it could easily be seen that in this case Rebekah's heart had been won by

the proposal. She acted plainly from a high principle of faith in the proposal as directed so manifestly by God. "A prudent wife is from the Lord."—Prov. 19: 14.

59. *And her nurse*. How beautiful! The old maid-servant of the house, who had cared for her and brought her up, must go with her. This is a custom still to be found in that land. The nurse's name was Deborah. (Ch. 35: 8.) She died before her mistress, and in the service of the family. The one who, even more than the mother, knew all about her, and could best do for her, and meet her wants, she was to her a choice memorial of home. She had other female attendants (vs. 61.)

60. The family gave to the betrothed sister their parting blessing; that of an innumerable offspring. (*Be thou for thousands of myriads*—according to the large terms used among them) and *let thy seed have victory over their enemies*. (See ch. 22: 17.) *To possess the gate*, is to have control of the city or stronghold. These terms are "indicative of a thin population and of a com-

61 ¶ And Rebekah arose, and her damsels, and they rode upon the camels, and followed the man: and the servant took Rebekah, and went his way.

62 And Isaac came from the way of the ° well of Lahai-roi; for he dwelt in the south country.

63 And Isaac went out ^p to meditate in the field at the eventide: and he lifted up his eyes, and saw, and behold, the camels *were* coming.

64 And Rebekah lifted up her eyes, and when she saw Isaac, ^q she lighted off the camel.

65 For she *had* said unto the servant, What man is this that walketh in the field to meet us? And the servant *had* said, It is my master: therefore, she took a vail and covered herself.

^o ch. 16: 14, and 25: 11. ^p Josh. 1: 8; Ps. 1: 2, and 77: 12, and 119: 15, and 143: 5.
^q Joch. 15: 18.

paratively rude state of society.” (See Ps. 45: 10–17.)

61. *Her damsels.* These were her attendants besides her nurse. These were probably given to her as part of her patrimony. (See ch. 23: 3.) Rebekah went in company with Eliezer, and the damsels (attendants and nurse and retinue) followed, in a train or caravan.

62. *And Isaac comes from entering Beer Lahai-roi*—was just come from the entering in of that place. This may mean that here he resided at this time. It was the well where the Covenant Angel had met Hagar. (See ch. 16: 14.) *He was living in the South Country.* And in ch. 25: 11, it is said that he dwelt by this well, and he was just now coming (or come) from that direction towards Beersheba, his father's home, to learn the result. Some suppose that he had been thither on account of its association with the family history and the omnipresence of the Covenant Angel, and had there laid this important matter before God. (See *Delitzsch*.) This would be a reason for noting this incidental fact. This view would be sustained by the connection: he *went out into the field to meditate*. Doubtless his mind was

occupied with this matter. And hence, we suppose, this incident is here stated. How fitting that this man of faith and son of promise should be found in so receptive an attitude—waiting for the blessing to come in answer to prayer. Upon such as wait on God, and wait for God, the blessing comes. ¶ *To meditate.* Chald.—*To pray.* So Luther. Gr.—*To exercise himself*, that is, in religious exercises. What so proper and natural to a believer, when such momentous interests were pending? The impression from the narrative is that he was deeply exercised for the result of Eliezer's mission, and how could he keep it back from his Covenant God. ¶ *At the eventide.* In the still hour of twilight, at the day's close,—a fit time for gathering up the items of the day, and for laying its cares and burdens upon God, and seeking His benediction. In this very attitude of committing his affairs to God, he sees the caravan coming.

64, 65. Rebekah, too, is alive to the scene, and as she sees this man walking towards them alone in the field, she inquires of Eliezer as to his name. And having learned that it was none other than Isaac, *she lighted off the camel.* (Lit.—*Sprang from the*

66 And the servant told Isaac all things that he had done.

67 And Isaac brought her into his mother Sarah's tent, and took Rebekah, and she became his wife; and he loved her: and Isaac ^r was comforted after his mother's *death*.

CHAPTER XXV.

THEN again Abraham took a wife, and her name *was* Keturah.

r ch. 38: 12.

camel) to receive him, and according to the custom, she put on a veil, which covers the face, and hangs down over her breast and shoulders. It is still customary in Syria and Palestine for the bride to be introduced to the groom covered with her veil, denoting modesty and subjection to her husband.

66, 67. The aged servant now makes his report of the whole negotiation, with all its deeply touching incidents. And Isaac received her most cordially. This was the mark of his faith, as it had been the mark of Rebekah's faith to leave her father's house to go at this application from a stranger who referred the case to God. Isaac now takes her into his mother's tent. How simple and beautiful! The tent vacated by his mother's death, where that bright light had gone out, is now to be lighted up by this charming young bride. And now the relation was formally assumed. *He took her and she became his wife*. What is most important is here added. ¶ *And he loved her*. It was a loving union. Marriage without love is misery. A good son makes a good husband; as also a good daughter makes a good wife. Here occurs the first formal mention of the conjugal love that so exalts and honors the ordinance of marriage. Thus Christ loves the church. (Eph. 5: 25.) Isaac and Rebekah are

patterns of conjugal affection. As the bride had been chosen without his personal agency, it is all the more important to note the fact that he was not disappointed. The Covenant Angel directed the choice. ¶ *And Isaac was comforted after his mother*—from mourning after his mother. It was now about three years since her decease. (1.) God can more than supply the breaches which he makes. (2.) Jesus loves the church as His bride (the Lamb's wife.) When He was introduced to her by John the Baptist, the friend of the Bridegroom, (groomsman,) He rejoiced. And John rejoiced greatly because of the Bridegroom's voice of joy at meeting His bride. (John 3: 29.) (3.) Christ presents to his bride, the church, the ascension gifts, and He loves her unto the end. Rebekah's marriage was most important to be so minutely recorded as she was to be the mother of the chosen seed, as Sarah was mother of all the faithful.

CHAPTER XXV.

§ 47. DEATH OF ABRAHAM. HIS BURIAL IN MACHPELAH. Ch. 25: 1-11.

In giving here some account of Ishmael prior to the further history of Isaac, Moses refers to the fact that

2 And ^ashe bare him Zimran, and Jokshan, and Medan, and Midian, and Ishbak, and Shuah.

3 And Jokshan begat Sheba, and Dedan. And the sons of Dedan were Asshurim, and Letushim, and Leummim.

4 And the sons of Midian: Ephah, and Ephher, and Hanoah, and Abidah, and Eldaah. All these *were* the children of Keturah.

5 ¶ And ^bAbraham gave all that he had unto Isaac.

6 But unto the sons of the concubines which Abraham had,

a 1 Chron. 1: 32. b ch. 24: 36.

Abraham had descendants from Keturah. It would seem from this narrative, that she was taken to wife after Sarah's death. Some have adduced reasons for supposing that their relation had been entered into previously. (1.) In vs. 6, and in 1 Chron. 1: 32, Keturah is called a *concubine* of Abraham. (2.) That as Abraham had six sons by her, it would seem that they must have been born before Isaac, since he was then "*as good as dead*," (Heb. 11: 12,) and that Isaac was born to him out of the course of nature. (3.) These sons, if born after Sarah's death, would seem to have been too young to send away from their father's house—say at 25 or 30. But it is replied (1) that these sons were in any case born after Isaac's birth, and hence after Abraham's renewal of vital powers, as Abraham was childless except in Ishmael, until Isaac's birth. (2.) During the thirty-eight years that he survived Sarah, these sons may have been born. (3.) As he abstained from taking a concubine till Sarah gave him Hagar, so he would naturally have abstained from taking any other while Sarah lived.—*Murphy* and *Kurtz*. As the history does not follow the chronological order, but sometimes goes back, at a new section as here, there is no difficulty in supposing that a previous transaction may be referred to, in introducing Ishmael's history, but there are strong reasons in favor of Ke-

turah having been taken after Sarah's death.

1. *Then again Abraham took a wife.* Lit.—*And Abraham added and took a wife.* She was doubtless an inferior wife as compared with Sarah.

2. These names are not certainly traceable in any known tribe. ¶ *Medan* and *Midian* are compared with *Modiana* on the east side of the *Elanitic gulf*. *Midian* is found in two places west of this gulf, and east of the Salt Sea. Moses took refuge among the former. The latter are east of Abraham's residence. ¶ *Shuah*. Bildad the *Shuhite*. (Job 8: 1.)

3. *Sheba*—probably the *Sabeans*, who robbed Job. (Job 1: 5.) ¶ *Dedan*; (See Jer. 25: 23; Isa. 21: 13; Jer. 49: 6;) in neighborhood of Edom. There is a *Sheba* among the descendants of Joktan, (ch. 10: 26, 28.)

4. *Ephah*. See Isa. 60: 6, where they are mentioned along with *Midian*. Similar names still exist in the country, but are not easily identified. "There are here six sons of Abraham, seven grandsons and three great grandsons, making sixteen descendants in all by Keturah."

5. *Unto Isaac*. This covenant son was the sole heir of Abraham. This disposition of his property was made pending his death. (Ch. 24: 36.)

6. He however, had not left his sons by the concubines destitute, for he had distributed "gifts" among

Abraham gave gifts, and ^c sent them away from Isaac his son (while he yet lived) eastward, unto ^d the east country.

7 And these *are* the days of the years of Abraham's life which he lived, an hundred threescore and fifteen years.

8 Then Abraham gave up the ghost, and ^e died in a good old age, an old man, and full of *years*; and ^f was gathered to his people.

9 And ^g his sons Isaac and Ishmael buried him in the cave of Machpelah, in the field of Ephron the son of Zohar the Hittite, which *is* before Mamre;

10 ^h The field which Abraham purchased of the sons of Heth: ⁱ there was Abraham buried, and Sarah his wife.

11 And it came to pass after the death of Abraham, that God blessed his son Isaac; and Isaac dwelt by the ^k well Lahai-roi.

^c ch. 21: 14. ^d Judg. 6: 3. ^e ch. 15: 15, and 49: 29. ^f ch. 35: 29; and 49: 33. ^g ch. 35: 29, and 50: 13. ^h ch. 23: 16. ⁱ ch. 49: 31. ^k ch. 16: 14, and 24: 62.

them, and *he sent them away from Isaac his son*, that there might be no disturbance and no confusion with the covenant household. This he did late in life. He sent them *eastward to the east country*, that is, Arabia, east from Beersheba where he lived, in the south of Palestine. Their descendants have settled Arabia. Ishmael had been sent off before this. (Ch. 21: 14.)

7. Abraham lived one hundred and seventy-five years. This was a shorter career than many of his eminent ancestors had, but it was fuller of Divine displays and favors, and an average length.

8. *Gave up the ghost and died—he breathed out and died,—expired.* ¶ *In a good old age—in a happy old age.* In ch. 15: 15, this was promised to him. ¶ *An old man and full.* Having reached old age and being full of comforts and satisfied with his experience of this life, ready and willing to depart. Our translators have added, "*of years.*" ¶ *Was gathered to his people.* This implies that his people exist in another world, and that he joined them at death. "It is also called 'going to his fathers,' (ch. 15: 15,) *being gathered to his fa-*

thers, (Judg. 2: 10,) but is constantly distinguished from departing this life and being buried, as it denotes reunion with friends gone before, and therefore presupposes faith in the personal continuance of a man after death, as a presentiment which the promises of God had exalted in the case of the patriarchs into a firm assurance of faith." (Heb. 11: 13.) *Delitzsch*. "This and the like expression in ch. 15: 15, give the first fact in the history of the soul after death, as the burial is the first step in that of the body." —*Murphy*.

9. Here at the burial of their venerated father, Isaac and Ishmael come together to perform the last solemn rites. Surely if ever there have been altercations and separations in a household, all may be forgotten and buried in a parent's burial. ¶ *Machpelah*. Abraham in buying a family burial-place had of course provided for his own sepulture. This was the act of his faith that promised to him and to his seed this land for a possession. (Ch. 23: 16.)

11. Isaac, as the heir and the son of promise, was signally blessed by God after his father's death. ¶ *The well Lahai-roi*. (See ch. 24: 62 and

12 ¶ Now these *are* the generations of Ishmael, Abraham's son, ¹whom Hagar, the Egyptian, Sarah's handmaid, bare unto Abraham.

13 And ^mthese *are* the names of the sons of Ishmael, by their names, according to their generations: the first-born of Ishmael, Nebajoth; and Kedar, and Adfeel, and Mibsam,

14 And Mishma, and Dumah, and Massa,

15 Hadar, and Temah, Jetur, Naphish, and Kedemah:

16 These *are* the sons of Ishmael, and these *are* their names, by their towns, and by their castles; ⁿtwelve princes according to their nations.

17 And these *are* the years of the life of Ishmael: an hundred and thirty and seven years: and ^ohe gave up the ghost and died, and was gathered unto his people.

18 ^pAnd they dwelt from Havilah unto Shur, that *is* before

1 chap. 16: 15. m 1 Chron. 1: 29. n ch. 17: 20. o ver. 8. p 1 Sam. 15: 7.

notes.) *Beer-la-hai-roi*, means *the well of the living one who seeth me*.

§ 47. a. GENERATIONS OF ISHMAEL. Ch. 25: 12-18.

Abraham was to be the father of many nations, and the promise is fulfilled here in part in Ishmael's line, and the promises to Ishmael are fulfilled also. (Ch. 16: 10; ch. 17: 20.) ¶ *Now these are the generations.* This is the eighth section so headed, and these words show a change of the subject by the same author. Before proceeding now to follow the covenant blessing in the line of Isaac, the author branches off to trace the history of Ishmael in brief.

13. *Nebajoth*. (See Isa. 60: 7.) The *Nabatei* inhabit Arabia Petrea, and extend eastward; Petra being the capital. ¶ *Kedar*. (See Isa. 21: 17.) Living between Petrea and Babylon. (Job 2: 10; Ezek. 27: 21.) ¶ *Dumah*. (Isa. 21: 11.) This place and *Tema* are in East Harra three quarters of an hour apart. (Job 6: 19; Isa. 21: 14.) ¶ *Jetur*. (See 1 Chron. 5: 19.) Hence the *Itureans* north of the Sea of Galilee.

16. *By their towns*, etc. Lit.—*In*

their encampments. Keil.—*In their strongholds*. ¶ *Twelve princes*—one for each tribe descended from his twelve sons. OBSERVE.—The Arabs are divided into two classes, according to their mode of life. They are either the wandering Bedouins, living in tents, or those who dwell in towns and villages. *Kalisch* renders the clause, "*By their villages and by their tents.*"

17. Ishmael lived a hundred and thirty-seven years. His death is here recorded by anticipation. It took place forty-eight years after Abraham's death, and when Isaac was one hundred and twenty-three years old. We may suppose that Ishmael died in the faith of his father Abraham, according to the patriarch's prayer for him.

18. The locality of the Ishmaelites is here given. The Ishmaelites are distinguished in the biblical account from the other inhabitants of Arabia, and this corresponds exactly with the Arab traditions. The oldest tribes of Arabia were the Cushites. (Ch. 10: 7.) The mixed tribes are both the Ishmaelites, here mentioned, and the other children of Abraham by Keturah, named here, (vs. 1-4.)

Egypt, as thou goest toward Assyria: *and* he died ^a in the presence of all his brethren.

19 ¶ And these *are* the generations of Isaac, Abraham's son: ^r Abraham begat Isaac:

20 And Isaac was forty years old when he took Rebekah to wife, ^s the daughter of Bethuel the Syrian of Padan-aram, ^t the sister to Laban the Syrian.

21 And Isaac entreated the LORD for his wife, because she *was*

q ch. 16 : 12. r Matt. 1 : 2. s ch. 22 : 23. t ch. 24 : 29.

The pure Arabs are the Shemitic descendants of Joctan. (Ch. 10 : 26-29.) ¶ *From Havilah unto Shur.* *Havilah* answers to more regions than one in the Biblical narratives. *Murphy* understands this *Havilah* as on the borders of Arabia Petraea and Felix, according to ch. 10 : 29, the country of the Chauloteans. This was the south-eastern border of their territory. ¶ *Unto Shur*—the south-western border of their country, (the desert of *Jifar*, ch. 16 : 7,) to the east of Egypt, "in the direction of Assyria." From these borders they extended their nomadic excursions to the north-east as far as the districts under Assyrian rule, that is, to the lands of the Euphrates, and, as *Josephus* says, dwelling from the Euphrates to the Red Sea. (See *Delitzsch*.) There seem to be plain traces of both Cushite and Semitic Arabs. (See ch. 10 : 7, and 11 : 29.) The borders here described are the same as given in 1 Sam. 15 : 7 for the conquests of Saul over the Amalekites. ¶ *And he died.* Lit.—*He fell*, or it fell to him. *He settled down.* This was the promise made to him (ch. 16 : 12) and reference is had to it here. The idea is included of keeping by force the settlement or abode, (Judg. 7 : 12. See Numb. 34 : 2.) ¶ *In the presence of his brethren.* He had his dwelling and the territory of his descendants alongside of his brethren, and unsubjected by them. (See Notes, ch. 16 : 12.)

19. The historian now passes to the family history of Isaac, and, as usual, begins with the birth of his sons and with the common formula denoting a new section. The section continues with the history of Isaac's twin sons, Jacob and Esau, up to ch. 36, where their "*generations*" follow.

20. Isaac's age at his marriage is here stated, and is important. ¶ *Forty years old.* He was in his prime. He does not fill any large space in the history. He was of a passive character, the man of patience, acquiescence, susceptibility, and obedience. His qualities were *filial*: he yielded himself to the father's act of laying him on the altar. This was also the working of his faith. "Accordingly, the docile and patient side of the saintly character is now to be presented to view."—*Murphy*. The apostle in the "Hebrews" notices him only as blessing Jacob and Esau concerning things to come. (Ch. 11 : 20.) ¶ *Bethuel the Syrian.* Syria was the country of his residence, not of his nativity.

21. *Entreated Jehovah.* His marriage was without issue for nearly twenty years. "The seed of promise was to be prayed for from the Lord, that it might not be regarded merely as a fruit of nature, but be received and recognized as a gift of grace. At the same time Isaac was to be exercised in the patience of faith in the Divine promise."—*Delitzsch*. Isaac does not resort to any human expe-

barren: "and the LORD was entreated of him, and "Rebekah his wife conceived.

22 And the children struggled together within her: and she said, If *it be* so, why *am I* thus? * And she went to inquire of the LORD.

23 And the LORD said unto her, "Two nations *are* in thy womb, and two manner of people shall be separated from thy bowels: and "the one people shall be stronger than *the other* people; and "the elder shall serve the younger.

24 ¶ And when her days to be delivered were fulfilled, behold *there were* twins in her womb.

u 1 Chron. 5: 20; 2 Chron. 33: 13; Ezra 8: 23. w Rom. 9: 10. x 1 Sam. 9: 9, and 10: 22. y ch. 17: 16, and 24: 60. z 2 Sam. 8: 14. a ch. 27: 29; Mal. 1: 3; Rom. 9: 12.

dient, as Abraham did, but 'applies to God for the blessing. ¶ *For his wife.* The terms mean *before, opposite to*, his wife, which *Luther* understands as referring to his intent desire for his object, having nothing in his eye but this. *Bush* takes it rather to imply that he prayed in presence of his wife or conjointly with her. But the term "*in presence of*" is different. So *Jamieson*, and refers to 1 Pet. 3: 7.

22. *Struggled together—jostled each other.* This expresses her feeling, and she was led thus to *inquire into* so strange a phenomenon. She was troubled by so singular a commotion and disturbance, and she naturally enough asked what was the meaning of this symptom in her case. Lit.—*If so, wherefore this am I?*—in this state. Vulg.—*Why was it necessary to conceive?* She had rather have been childless. She may mean, "*Why am I alive?*" (See ch. 27: 46.) Like a true believer, she makes her inquiry of God, through the Divine oracle, and she received a prophetic reply. Her times were in His hand. Here she found the explanation. There was some place of worship there.

23. This struggling, which makes itself so strangely felt that she will never forget it, is significant of a

momentous future,—that this birth is to be of two sons, who represent two nations.—*Keil.* The struggle represents their future conflicts. ¶ *Two nations*—the founders of two nations—the Edomites and the Israelites. Their hostility began to appear as early as in the Exodus, the beginning of their national existence. The Israelites were not allowed to pass through the territory of the Edomites in peace; on the contrary, they were met by an opposing army. The enmity was kept up through their generations. This hostility was most unnatural between those so nearly related; but it was foreshadowed here at their birth. ¶ Lit.—*And two peoples from thy bowels are separated*, (vs. 24, etc.) Two different people shall be divided or separated from each other from the time of their birth. The order of nature was to be reversed in their case—*the elder should serve the younger.* See Rom. 9: 12, where the apostle dwells on this historical fact. ¶ *One people.* Lit.—*A people shall be stronger than a people*—one than the other. So the Israelites subjected the Edomites.

24, 25. *Red.* This was a singular aspect of her first-born, the elder son. It would indicate his strong animal, wild nature and premature development. His hairy covering,

25 And the first came out red, ^ball over like an hairy garment: and they called his name Esau.

26 And after that came his brother out, and ^chis hand took hold on Esau's heel; and ^dhis name was called Jacob: and Isaac *was* threescore years old when she bare them.

27 And the boys grew: and Esau was ^ea cunning hunter, a man of the field; and Jacob *was* ^fa plain man ^gdwelling in tents.

b ch. 27: 11, 16, 23. c Hos. 12: 3. d ch. 27: 36. e ch. 27: 3, 5. f Job 1: 1, 8, and 2; Ps. 37: 37. g Heb. 11: 9.

like an animal skin, was of a reddish color, all over like a hairy coat. (1 Sam. 16: 12; 17: 42.) He received his name from this feature—is called *hairy*. Some understand it as meaning *made, done, finished*, from the verb *asah, to do*, like a full-grown man, as to his hair.

26. *On Esau's heel*. It is shown by medical authorities how this could naturally occur. This was so ordered by God as to be significant, and it was expounded to the mother accordingly. God can and does often so order events, as to make them typical and foreshadowy of other events. Especially in the times of the church's minority He was pleased so to do for their instruction. ¶ *Jacob* received his name from this circumstance. It means *he shall hold the heel*, (Hos. 12: 4,) thence to grasp the heel in wrestling so as to trip up one. Hence the *supplanter*—tripper up—(ch. 27: 36.) Some take it to mean one who is *on the heel* of another—*following after*. The age of Isaac at their birth is now stated as threescore years. OBSERVE.—Paul dwells on this passage to show the sovereign purpose of God according to a law of separation and of election. Abraham was taken out from his kindred and country Isaac was chosen over Ishmael from Abraham's sons, who were by different mothers. And here still further, Jacob is chosen over Esau, though they were of the same covenant mother. And still further,

to show that the son of promise must come not according to the ordinary course of nature, and to point forward to the miraculous birth. Isaac was born out of course, and so was Jacob. And Jacob, though the younger, as Isaac was, should rule the elder. It is of *grace* and not of *nature*.

27. The growth of maturity of the sons is recorded. ¶ *A cunning hunter*. Lit.—*A man knowing hunting; a man of the field*. Taking to the field for his occupation. *And Jacob was a plain man*. Lit.—*An upright man*, rendered elsewhere, *a perfect man*—meaning here in contrast with Esau, that he was an *orderly, contented man, sincere man, dwelling in tents* instead of roaming the fields. He was a man of *home* disposition, instead of an *out of doors* man. He was thus his mother's favorite for his domestic qualities, and Esau was his father's favorite, as being more active and manly, and enterprising. It is also meant that he was a man of pastoral life, instead of a hunter. The same phrase is used in the Epistle to the Hebrews, in reference to the patriarchs, and naming Jacob; (ch. 11: 9) and there the *dwelling in tents* is contrasted with a fixed habitation as in a city. The calling of a shepherd was migratory, but much more quiet and settled than that of a hunter. The shepherd in that land moves from place to place with his flocks and herds, changing their pasture with the season.

28 And Isaac loved Esau, because he did ^h eat of *his* venison: ⁱ but Rebekah loved Jacob.

29 ¶ And Jacob *sod* pottage: and Esau came from the field, and he *was* faint.

30 And Esau said to Jacob, Feed me, I pray thee, with that same *red pottage*; for I *am* faint; therefore was his name called Edom.

31 And Jacob said, Sell me this day thy birthright.

h ch. 27: 19, 25, 31. i ch. 27: 6.

28. *Because.* Lit.—*Because game* (venison) *was in his mouth*, i. e., he was feasted by his game. So low a reason is given for the father's preference. It is all on the side of nature. When parents have favorites among their children in so marked a way, the tendency is to engender and promote strife in the household.

29. An incident now occurred which was trifling in itself, but momentous in its consequences. ¶ *Sod pottage*, that is *seethed or boiled a soup*. "Jacob had become a sage in the practical comforts of life." This *pottage* is a very common dish in that country. It is made of different grain or lentiles, bruised and boiled as a broth. There was a red pottage, made chiefly of a red grain. While Jacob had this pottage fresh, Esau comes in from hunting and is faint and weary.

30. In this condition Esau strongly craves the fresh soup, and makes request of Jacob for it. ¶ *Feed me.* Heb.—*Give me to eat, I pray thee, of the red, the red, the this.* The language shows the eagerness and craving of Esau's hunger, importunate for this savory dish. "*Let me swallow some of that red, that red there.*"—*Delitzsch.* ¶ *Edom*, meaning *red*, was given to him as his name from this incident, though it might also have belonged to him from the complexion of his hairy skin, and here it would be specially fixed upon him from this event. So *Jacob*, who

received the name from the incident at his birth, had the name confirmed to him, and with a new significance from his conduct in this history.

31. *Thy birthright.* Jacob takes advantage of Esau's hunger, to get his birthright. As Jesus was tempted "when a hungered," so was Esau. The birthright had been appointed to Jacob by God, but here he takes his own carnal expedient to get it; showing his weak side of mere human policy, instead of the faith which he should have exercised in the promise. It was a plain business transaction of purchase and sale; but many a bargain is as fraudulent as if illegally made. If the equivalent was amazingly poor, it was Esau's folly and fault that he should so have sacrificed his prerogative for a mess of pottage. Under the Mosaic law the birthright consisted of a double portion of the estate, (Deut. 21: 17;) but under the patriarchs it embraced the chieftainship—the rule over the brethren and the family, (ch. 27: 29,) and the title to the blessings of the promise, which included the future possession of Canaan and of covenant fellowship with Jehovah. (28: 4.) And as the first-born were claimed by God for his service, it would seem that the primogeniture included, also, originally, the priestly office in the family, and so passed from the father to the first-born, and from the first-born afterwards to the tribe of Levi and family of Aaron,

32 And Esau said, Behold, I *am* at the point to die: and what profit shall this birthright do to me?

33 And Jacob said, Swear to me this day; and he swore unto him: and ^k he sold his birthright unto Jacob.

34 Then Jacob gave Esau bread and pottage of lentiles; and ^l he did eat and drink, and rose up, and went his way: thus Esau despised *his* birthright.

k Heb. 12: 16. l Eccles. 8: 15; Isa. 22: 13; 1 Cor. 15: 32.

(Exod. 22: 29; Numb. 3: 45.) (See the Chaldee Targum on ch. 49: 3.) So the Messiah is called the *First-born*, higher than the kings of the earth, (Ps. 89: 28,) and “first-born among many brethren,” and “first-begotten of every creature”—meaning that He is God’s birthright Son.

32. This proposition was seriously considered by Esau. He knew that in selling his birthright he would part with the highest prerogative temporal and spiritual; but he argues that as he seemed at the point of death the birthright would be of little value to him, and he places his present gratification before all other and higher good. This is the very acting out of his sensual, animal nature. Hence the apostle calls him “a *profane person*, who, for one morsel of meat, sold his birthright.” (Heb. 12: 16.) ¶ *I am at the point to die.* Heb.—*I am going to die.* Just because of the faintness that came over him, and his extreme desire to partake of this food, he sees nothing in the future so precious as his present repast would be. It seems amazing that he should so have seriously judged and acted. But it is no more amazing than the conduct of men every day, who put their present trifling gratification before eternal blessings. Often, indeed, in mere temporal matters, men will sell a promise to pay, or a bond that has long time to run, for a very small sum, to expend upon present indulgence. And they argue as Esau did.

Perhaps the idea was included that he could not live on promises. He might die soon, and then the birthright would do *him* little good; and hence he would prefer a small pleasure in hand. Esau seems to have set no estimate upon the spiritual privileges of the birthright.

33. *Swear to me.* Jacob will make a serious transaction of it, because he is alive to its import, and knew and valued what he was getting as Esau did not value it. And so the transaction was solemnly concluded. Jacob held the birthright by a lawful tenure, and the transfer was valid. How many baptized youth sell their Christian birthright for such a mess of pottage! For present indulgence, they turn their back upon their church privileges, and their covenant heritage, and barter away their future all.

34. *Bread.* It seems to have been bread along with broth—(not “*food, even pottage.*”) Esau indulged his appetite and was satisfied with his bargain. He was *carnal*, not spiritual. He was not a suitable person to have the birthright. He proves himself to be unfit. His conduct thus vindicates the plan of God. ¶ *He did eat and drink.* His frivolity is manifest—careless of the consequences, only so as that he had his present fill. ¶ *Thus.* The censure is here put upon his conduct, as a *despising* of his birthright. This it really was—counting all its precious covenant benefits, temporal and spiritual, as

CHAPTER XXVI.

AND there was a famine in the land, besides ^athe first famine that was in the days of Abraham. And Isaac went unto ^bAbimelech king of the Philistines unto Gerar.

a ch. 12: 10. b ch. 20: 2.

of less value than a single meal. We do not justify Jacob in his expedients. But he is the man of faith, nevertheless, as Esau is the man of unbelief. (Heb. 12: 16.) Jacob is punished, afterwards, in the sufferings and perplexities and want which came upon him in connection with his craftiness. In the after history Jacob does not make this transaction the basis of a claim. (1.) *Bishop Hall* remarks, "There never was any meat except the forbidden fruit, so dearly purchased as this broth of Jacob." (2.) How sadly is the faith of God's people mixed with unbelief, and damaged by carnal expedients! Jacob gains nothing by this, and dishonors God and loses his own credit. (3.) What a crisis and decision in the case of Esau; for "he found no place of repentance, though he sought it carefully with tears." (Heb. 12: 17.)

CHAPTER XXVI.

§ 49. COVENANT RENEWED TO ISAAC IN GERAR. ABIMELECH AND REBEKAH.

The further history of Isaac is now given. He passes through trials remarkably similar to those of his father, yet with striking differences in the particulars, sufficient to show how similar are the cases of believers in the main, yet how unlike, according to their respective characters and God's dealings. He is tried by a sore famine as his father was, goes out in the direction of Egypt, as the grana-

ry of the world, but is not allowed to leave his country, as his father had done—and receives the Divine promise made to Abraham, of the land, of large posterity, and of saving blessings for the race. Strangely enough he resorts to the same expedient among strangers as his father had used, and pretends that Rebekah is his sister. But instead of his wife being taken from him by the king, she is secured to him by his special edict. In both cases a covenant is made with Abimelech. Instead of inferring that there is any lack of truth in the history because of the likeness in these two cases, we observe that it is altogether in accordance with human observation that a son readily practises the same art as his father and often repeats his history in the main.

1. Isaac had last been found at the well *Lahai-roi*. (Ch. 25: 11.) ¶ *A famine*. This is expressly distinguished from that which occurred in Abraham's time, and which is called *the first*—nearly an hundred years before this. This famine led Isaac to depart from Canaan towards Egypt, with the view, it would seem, of going thither for food. (vs. 2.) ¶ *Abimelech*. This seems to have been the name of the royal line, as was the name *Pharaoh* in Egypt. It means "*My father the king*." And this is a royal, titular name. This may have been the son of the former king of Abraham's time. ¶ *Gerar*. This was the southern city of the Philistines who probably came from Egypt. (Ch. 10: 14.) Abraham had

2 And the LORD appeared unto him, and said, Go not down into Egypt: dwell in ^cthe land which I shall tell thee of.

3 ^aSojourn in this land, and ^eI will be with thee, and ^fwill bless thee: for unto thee, and unto thy seed ^gI will give all these countries, and I will perform ^hthe oath which I sware unto Abraham thy father;

4 And ⁱI will make thy seed to multiply as the stars of heaven, and will give unto thy seed all these countries: ^kand in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed:

5 ^lBecause that Abraham obeyed my voice, and kept my charge, my commandments, my statutes, and my laws.

c ch. 12: 1. d ch. 20: 1; Ps. 39: 12; Heb. 11: 9. e ch. 23: 15. f ch. 12: 2. g ch. 13: 15, and 15: 18. h. ch. 22: 16; Ps. 105: 9. i ch. 15: 5, and 22: 17. k ch. 12: 3, and 22: 18. l ch. 22: 16, 18.

sworn to the king to be friendly and faithful to his people, (ch. 21: 22-24,) and this covenant made with Isaac's ancestor, would secure to him some confidence and respect.

2, 4. Jehovah here for the first time appeared unto Isaac. The Covenant God of his father repeats to him the covenant promise. Because he is the heir of this land he is not to leave it as his father did. The time for the sojourn of the chosen seed in that land has not yet come (ch. 15: 13.) ¶ *Dwell.* The verb is *Shakan*, which denotes temporary abode. Lit.—To *tabernacle* or dwell in tents. (Heb. 11: 9.) He was to dwell as a stranger in the promised land. ¶ *Shall tell thee.* This reminds us of God's language to Abraham when called from Ur to Palestine. (Ch. 12: 1.) The idea is that he was to follow strictly the Divine direction, and depend implicitly upon His word.

3. *Sojourn.* Tarry as a sojourner and stranger. ¶ *I will be with thee.* In the highest sense this is fulfilled to believers in the person of "Immanuel," *God with us.* (See ch. 21: 22.) He is driven out of his home in search of food, and finds the promise of plenty, and discovers the resources there are for him in God's covenant. How often are our times of affliction

made to us the occasions of finding out all that there is for us in God. ¶ *Will bless thee.* God's presence is itself a rich blessing. Besides the covenant is repeated to him. 1st. The land. ¶ *All these countries.* (See ch. 15: 18-21.) These districts of the Holy land now possessed by various tribes. He will fulfil to him and to his seed His oath to Abraham, as he is the immediate posterity named in the oath. (Ch. 22: 16.) ¶ *Perform.* Heb.—*Establish*, make good. (Lit.)—*Cause to stand.*

4. The next item in the covenant promise is an abundant posterity—as *the stars of heaven* for multitude. The third item is the spiritual blessing for the world, to come through this covenant line. The numberless posterity is fulfilled in a spiritual seed, and in the same spiritual sense is this world-wide blessing to be realized. ¶ *All the nations* are contemplated and included in the blessing.

5. All this is expressly on account of Abraham's obedience and fidelity to the Divine covenant. The piety of Abraham is noted by the Hebrew lawgiver here in legal terms belonging to a later date, when the history was written and the law was completed. The terms denote a full and complete obedience to the commands

6 ¶ And Isaac dwelt in Gerar:

7 And the men of the place asked *him* of his wife; and ^m he said, *She is my sister*: for ⁿ he feared to say, *She is my wife*; lest, *aid he*, the men of the place should kill me for Rebekah; because she ^o *was* fair to look upon.

8 And it came to pass when he had been there a long time, that Abimelech king of the Philistines looked out at a window, and saw, and behold, Isaac *was* sporting with Rebekah his wife.

9 And Abimelech called Isaac and said, Behold, of a surety she is thy wife: and how saidst thou, *She is my sister*? And Isaac said unto him, Because I said, Lest I die for her.

10 And Abimelech said, What *is* this thou hast done unto us?

m ch. 12: 13, and 20: 2, 13. n Prov. 29: 25. o ch. 24: 16.

and directions of God. ¶ *Kept my charge.* Heb.—*Kept my keeping, my charge, my special commission.* This is defined by the particulars following my *commandments*, instructions and orders: as to leave Ur, offer up Isaac, etc. ¶ *My statutes.* The express institutes of the ceremonial. ¶ *My laws*, moral laws as of the decalogue, all referring to his universal obedience. OBSERVE.—The son is blessed on account of the fidelity of the father. The covenant is a household covenant—"To thee and to thy seed,"—and here it is proved to be such. Yet the obedience of the son is required. (See Acts 2: 39.)

6, 7. Gerar was the place besides Egypt, where Abraham had used the same device of concealing his true relation to his wife, and had called her his sister, as an expedient to protect her and himself. The men of Gerar *asked of his wife*, being impressed with her appearance, because she was fair to look upon. (See ch. 24: 16.) Isaac replied that she was his sister, and this falsity he practised out of a shameful fear lest the men of the place should kill him for Rebekah. This was also the motive in Abraham's case. (Ch. 12: 11, 12.) It was unworthy of men of faith, and proved a poor device in each case,

where they ought to have trusted in God. A lie is a pitiable expedient for self-protection, and it makes God a liar. If Isaac was influenced to this by the example of his father, did he not remember how this very falsity involved his father in serious trouble and disgrace? (Ch. 20: 9.) So also here it turns out poorly for Isaac, (vs. 9.) It would seem from both these cases (ch. 20: 13) that this was a common pretence with married people among strangers, for security.

8. *A long time.* Heb.—*When the days were extended there.* Rebekah was yet in the prime of life, though she had been married thirty-five years, and had two sons fifteen years old. ¶ *Abimelech.* This was the royal name of the Philistine kings, and it was not the same Abimelech as in Abraham's case, ninety years before this. (Ch. 20: 13. See vs. 1.) ¶ *Was sporting.* There was something in Isaac's familiarity with her which showed that she was nearer to him than a sister. Here the fact comes to light without Divine intervention.

9, 10. Abimelech shows the highest sense of propriety, the farthest from anything to justify Isaac's suspicion. He expostulates with Isaac,

one of the people might lightly have lien with thy wife, and ^pthou shouldest have brought guiltiness upon us.

11 And Abimelech charged all *his* people, saying, He that ^qtoucheth this man or his wife shall surely be put to death.

12 Then Isaac sowed in that land, and received in the same year ^ran hundred-fold: and the LORD ^sblessed him:

13 And the man ^twaxed great, and went forward, and grew until he became very great:

14 For he had possession of flocks, and possession of herds, and great store of servants: and the Philistines ^uenvied him.

15 For all the wells ^wwhich his father's servants had digged in the days of Abraham his father, the Philistines had stopped them, and filled them with earth.

p ch. 20: 9. q Ps. 105: 15. r Matt. 13: 8; Mark 4: 8. s ver. 3; ch. 24: 1, 35; Job 42: 12. t ch. 24: 35; Ps. 112: 3; Prov. 10: 22. u ch. 37: 11; Eccles. 4: 4. w ch. 21: 30.

as his predecessor had done with Abraham, and on the same ground. He inquires for his motive in using such deception, and sets before him the danger to which he had exposed his people by such a deceit. He refers to the *guiltiness* which might easily have been brought upon his subjects by such deception. There was here the evidence of some salutary fear of God. Heb.—*Asham* was under the law properly a *debt*; the punishment called *asham* was properly the *trespass-offering*. It is regarded in the light of damages or reparation for a wrong done to the Lord. This offence referred to by Abimelech was one of the four cases in which the trespass-offering was demanded by the law. (Levit. 19: 20.) The Greek version renders this word by the term meaning *ignorance* or *inadvertence* (See Heb. 9: 7) as distinguished from wilful sin. ¶ *Lightly* — easily.

11. Abimelech charges his people against laying hand upon either Isaac or Rebekah for their injury, and threatens them with death as the penalty. (Josh. 9: 19.)

12. Isaac's prosperity in Gerar is now stated. He cultivated the soil and sowed grain for a crop, and Je-

hovah blessed him with a very large harvest—a *hundred fold*. ¶ *Received*. Heb.—*Found*—inventoried. “Thirty, sixty, and a hundred fold” is the variety of product according to the different soils in that land. His yield was the largest that is mentioned. In ordinary cases the return is not greater than twenty-five or thirty fold.

13. *Went forward and grew—went on to grow*. “*Became increasingly greater*.”—Delitzsch. *Until he was great exceedingly*. This was the effect of God's blessing—the blessing of his Covenant Lord, Jehovah.

14. *For. And there was to him possession of flocks, etc., and much service*. (See Job 1: 3.) On account of his becoming so strong and rich and powerful, *the Philistines envied him*. They began to fear the presence among them of so formidable a force. The shepherds in that land also engage more or less at times in agriculture, and the appearance was of Isaac settling permanently among them. Hence they were busy in disturbing his comfort, so as to make him remove.

15. *The wells*. The digging of wells in that country makes a title to unoccupied lands. Abraham had

16 And Abimelech said unto Isaac, Go from us: for thou ^x art much mightier than we.

17 ¶ And Isaac departed thence, and pitched his tent in the valley of Gerar, and dwelt there.

18 And Isaac digged again the wells of water which they had digged in the days of Abraham his father: for the Philistines had stopped them after the death of Abraham: ^y and he called their names after the names by which his father had called them.

19 And Isaac's servants digged in the valley, and found there a well of springing water.

20 And the herdmen of Gerar did ^z strive with Isaac's herdmen,

x Exod. 1: 9. y ch. 21: 31. z ch. 21: 25.

dug wells there, and Isaac could claim these and the grounds belonging, under the covenant made by the former king with his father. But the people filled the wells with rubbish. Through the plains in the south of Palestine, we passed many wells of large diameter, stoned around the sides and level with the surface, open and dry. One well we came to after a hot ride. It was disguised by the overflow of water, which formed a muddy pool around it, in the midst of which we could see only a square stone. A gentleman of our company, anxious to give his pony drink, rode him into the pool, and, as the animal advanced a few steps, he suddenly plunged into what proved the open well. His rider sprang and laid hold of the stone. The poor animal was in the well, with his head out of the water, and only with very hard work of all hands did we succeed in bringing him out, safe and sound. The stoppage of wells would drive out the settlers. To cut off the water supply from an enemy is victory anywhere.

16. The king formally proposed to Isaac to remove from among them, and frankly gave his reason,—that they were afraid of his power, from his large wealth and increasing servants; (vs. 14;) though this may have been said to conciliate.

17. Isaac was a man of submission and endurance, and, instead of risking the trouble threatened by remaining, he removed. ¶ *Pitched his tent—encamped*—referring sometimes to military encamped and to a more settled habitation than the common term for nomadic tenting. ¶ *The Valley of Gerar, or the Wady*—"the undulating land of Gerar"—a narrow plain, through which runs a stream (*Jurf*) which would help to supply his need. ¶ *Dwelt there*. This is the term for more settled abode.

18. He set at work to open the old wells, which had been dug there in his father's time, but which had been closed up by the Philistines after Abraham's death. This was not to be his permanent abode, because it was not the territory of the promised land. He restored to the wells the old names they had borne in his father's day. This was a noble feeling, to keep up the family memorials and to follow in his father's faith and footsteps.

19. A new well was now dug by Isaac's servants. This was Isaac's right. ¶ *Of springing water*. Heb.—*Of living waters*—that is, of running water, fresh and not stagnant.

20. This valuable well was the ground of contention between the herdmen of Isaac and those of Gerar. It was a very important pos-

saying, The water *is* ours: and he called the name of the well Esek; because they strove with him.

21 And they digged another well, and strove for that also: and he called the name of it Sitnah.

22 And he removed from thence, and digged another well; and for that they strove not: and he called the name of it Rehoboth; and he said, For now the LORD hath made room for us, and we shall ^abe fruitful in the land.

23 And he went up from thence to Beer-sheba.

24 And the LORD appeared unto him the same night, and said,

a ch. 17: 6, and 28: 3, and 41: 52; Exod. 1: 7.

session, and was claimed by the people of the country. ¶ *Esek*. *Oppression*. Gr.—*Injury*, because they injured him. Latin.—*Calumny*. ¶ *Because they strove with—oppressed him*.

21. *Strove*. This is a different term from the former, and means *contended*. ¶ *Sitnah*. From the term *Satan*, and means *accusation*.

22. Isaac yielded, in both these cases, his just claims rather than to have strife. The one who gives the second blow makes the battle. He was not a man of contention, though they would contend with him. He followed the Divine injunction, "If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men." He must have a supply of water. Accordingly, he again removes, and digs another well, which he calls *Rehoboth*, meaning *space*, *enlargement*. Robinson found this name preserved in *Wady el Ruhaibeh*, midway between *Wady Jerar* (Gerar) and *Wady es Seba* (Beersheba), at that very point in the wilderness where the roads to Gaza and Hebron diverge. Near this is *Wady es Shutein*, (Sitnah,) Isaac is now on the road from Gerar to Beersheba. ¶ *Room for us*. The patriarch recognizes Jehovah's provision for his camp, and the pledge in this of prosperity in the land. He has gotten quite out of the strife. Isaac's homely

realizing faith in a present and presiding Lord here comes out.

23. *To Beersheba*. Wearied, as he must have been with such disturbances in the Philistine country, he is all the more ready to go to Beersheba, the border town of the promised land, and the paternal homestead, where the covenant blessings had been promised. Here God appeared to Abraham, (ch. 20: 1,) and now he again appears here to Isaac, (vs. 24,) and yet afterwards to Jacob, (ch. 46: 1-4.) This place therefore, was the place of high covenant interest. Ranke observes that the previous existence of this name is here presupposed, while vs. 15 expressly states that Isaac restored the old names to the wells which his father had dug.

24. *Appeared*. The patriarchal period is that of *Theophany*, added to promises. Afterwards a religion of symbolical institutes will be further added. ¶ *The God of Abraham*. "God is not the God of the dead, but of the living." Therefore he is assured that Abraham is not lost by death, nor God's covenant with him lost. (See ch. 18: 32, 35, 37, 38.) This is the same person as the Angel of the Covenant who appeared to Moses in Horeb, in the burning bush, (see Exod. 3: 2,) and is therefore the Messiah. Abraham was the man of faith, Isaac was the man of endurance, and Jacob was

^b *I am* the God of Abraham thy father: ^c fear not, for ^d *I am* with thee, and will bless thee, and multiply thy seed for my servant Abraham's sake.

25 And he ^e builded an altar there, and ^f called upon the name of the LORD, and pitched his tent there: and there Isaac's servants digged a well.

26 ¶ Then Abimelech went to him from Gerar, and Ahuzzath one of his friends, ^g and Phichol the chief captain of his army.

27 And Isaac said unto them, Wherefore come ye to me, seeing ^h ye hate me, and have ⁱ sent me away from you?

28 And they said, We saw certainly that the LORD ^k was with

b ch. 17: 7, and 24: 12, and 28: 13; Exod. 3: 6; Acts 7: 32. c ch. 15: 1. d ver. 3: 4. e ch. 12: 7, and 13: 18. f Ps. 116: 17. g ch. 21: 22. h Judg. 11: 7. i ver. 16. k ch. 21: 22, 23.

the man of prayer. God is God to each believer in all his peculiar circumstances. OBSERVE.—Isaac is here promised the blessing for Abraham's sake. This is the actual working of the household covenant. God has so displayed Himself in all the history of the church as a covenant God to the families of His people. And we may trust God for our children if we be faithful, not as if He would bless them for any merit of ours, or theirs, but for His covenant mercy and love in Christ Jesus. God's promises remove our grounds of fear.

25. *An altar.* This was the public testimony to God which he set up there, in instituting thus the public worship of God. It would seem that he first paid his homage to God, there, and thus consecrated the place for his residence. He first built an altar and then digged a well, and fixed his abode there, where he had located a sanctuary. ¶ *Digged a well.* As Abraham had dug a well here, which probably had been stopped by the jealous people. (See ch. 21: 31, and notes.) There are two wells now existing at Beersheba, (which is now called *Bir-es-Seba*), and both of them have water, sweet and pure.

26. *Abimelech*, the present king, seeks a covenant with Isaac, such as

his predecessor had made with Abraham, and it is a renewal of that covenant. (Ch. 20.) But Abraham was offered a home in that kingdom, and Isaac had been invited to leave. ¶ *Ahuzzath*, etc. This personage is called "*one of his friends*," which means *his privy counsellor*. This person does not appear in the former case. ¶ *Phichol*. This is probably an official name for the commander-in-chief, and not the same person as mentioned before, as some ninety years had elapsed. This treaty was meant to be formal, as being public business.

27. Isaac inquires of him sharply as to his errand, seeing the hostile disposition that had been displayed towards him. He construes it as hatred, and refers to their sending him away from them, alluding to the king's request that he should go away (vs. 16) implying that though the king had pretended that Isaac was mightier than they, yet he was able to enforce his command, and that it was hard usage.

28. The secret of the transaction is here revealed. They saw that Isaac, like Abraham, was a friend of God, and enjoyed the Divine presence and favor, (see ch. 21: 22,) and this made him strong and formidable, as had been seen in Abraham's vic-

thee : and we said, Let there be now an oath betwixt us, *even* betwixt us and thee, and let us make a covenant with thee :

29 That thou wilt do us no hurt, as we have not touched thee, and as we have done unto thee nothing but good, and have sent thee away in peace : ¹ *thou art* now the blessed of the LORD.

30 ^m And he made them a feast, and they did eat and drink.

31 And they rose up betimes in the morning, and ⁿsware one to another : and Isaac sent them away, and they departed from him in peace.

32 And it came to pass the same day, that Isaac's servants came and told him concerning the well which they had digged, and said unto him, We have found water.

1 ch. 24 : 31 ; Ps. 115 : 15. m ch. 19 : 3. n ch. 21 : 31.

tory over the four kings, etc. ¶ *We saw certainly.* Heb.—*Seeing we have seen.* This treaty sought by the king was a fulfilment of God's promise, (ch. 12 : 2,) and here was a proof of what they were forced to acknowledge, that God wrought for Isaac. ¶ *And we said.* This is what they proposed, and may refer to the former transaction with Abraham, of which this was only a renewal. It is natural (says *Kalisch*) that the succeeding part of the narrative should in almost every particular be parallel with the corresponding event in Abraham's life. (Ch. 21 : 22–32.)

29. *That thou wilt,* etc. Heb.—*If thou shalt do us hurt.* He proposes the common form of imprecation, calling curses upon himself if he should harm them. The king seeks only to bind the patriarch by oath, but not to bind himself. He makes their kind treatment of Isaac the ground of his proposal, implying fairly that they would not touch him in future. But unhappily this was not according to the facts. They had worried and injured him, and driven him away from the fruit of his toil. ¶ *Not touched thee.* Not driven thee away forcibly. ¶ *Thou art now (the) blessed of the Lord.* "This explains the one-sidedness of the covenant. Isaac needed no guar-

anty from them as Jehovah was with him." This clause may refer to his being under the Divine protection, and therefore safe, or as being sufficiently provided for not to make account of the injury done him by the servants. Or it may express the king's *salaam* at the conclusion of the treaty pronouncing him blessed, or supposing he makes the treaty as proposed, calling him *blessed of Jehovah*. The king knows the name of Jehovah.

30. Though Isaac had received the king so sharply, yet he yields to his plea, however selfish it is, and makes them a feast as the common mode of celebrating a covenant. (See ch. 31 : 54.)

31. Early in the morning after the feast, they exchanged their solemn oath. ¶ *One to another.* Heb.—*A man to his brother.* The treaty engaged to keep the peace with these Philistines, and to exempt them from the fate of the Canaanites. Isaac showed them true hospitality and fidelity, sending them away in peace, as they had not done to him.

32. Blessings follow quickly in the path of a large-hearted charity. As Isaac forgave them for depriving him of his wells, (rather than quarrel with them,) so the Lord opened to him another well for his need *the same day*.

33 And he called it Shebah; ° therefore the name of the city is Beer-sheba unto this day.

34 ¶ ^p And Esau was forty years old when he took to wife Judith the daughter of Beeri the Hittite, and Bashemath the daughter of Elon the Hittite:

35 Which ^a were a grief of mind unto Isaac and to Rebekah.

CHAPTER XXVII.

AND it came to pass, that when Isaac was old, and ^a his eyes were dim, so that he could not see, he called Esau his eldest

o ch. 21: 31. p ch. 36: 2. q ch. 27: 46, and 28: 1, 8. a ch. 48: 10; 1 Sam. 3: 2.

The well that Isaac's servant digged (vs. 25) was a success. They *found water*.

33. He called the well *Sheba* (oath) in commemoration of the oath here made, thus confirming the name given the town by Abraham, on the like occasion. (Ch. 21: 31.) It is not here said that the place now first took its name, but that it retained its name under this new confirmation up to the writer's day. It was rather the *well* that was named by Abraham "*Beersheba*," meaning "*well of an oath*." Now the name was again given to the well, and was thereafter fixed upon *the city*.

34, 35. *Forty years old*. This was eighteen years after this new settlement, and we have no record of the interval, which was doubtless quiet and peaceful, in enjoyment of covenant relations. His father Isaac was also forty years old when he married. (Ch. 25: 20.) Esau took two wives which was polygamy, and these were of the heathen, *Hittites*, whom God had cursed, and who were steeped in crime and corruption. These were the children of Heth, with whom Abraham had dealt in buying Machpelah. They dwelt around Hebron. It was an unholy alliance and especially for this family of the covenant. These daughters-in-law were a *grief*

of mind to Esau's parents, who valued their relations to God. Esau at length saw his mistake, (ch. 28: 8, 9,) and had reason to lament his wrong doing, which was made an offence against God by the Levitical law. ¶ *Grief of mind*. Greek.—*Were contentious with*. Chald.—*Were rebellious and stubborn against*. Jer. Targ.—*They served God with a strange service*,—were idolaters. Heb.—*They were bitterness of spirit to Isaac and to Rebekah*, a standing grief, not only because of their heathen descent, but also because of their uncongenial tempers. They brought only trouble into the family. Such ill-assorted marriages, of those having a differing religion or unsuitable connections and associations in life, introduce discord into the household. "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers," etc. (2 Cor. 6: 14.)

CHAPTER XXVII.

§ 50. JACOB OVERREACHES ESAU, AND OBTAINS THE BIRTHRIGHT BLESSING.

Isaac growing old, wishes to give his paternal blessing to Esau, but Rebekah by stratagem secures it to her favorite son, Jacob. This pro-

son, and said unto him, My son : and he said unto him, Behold, *here am I*.

2 And he said, Behold now, I am old, I ^b know not the day of my death.

3 ^c Now therefore take, I pray thee, thy weapons, thy quiver and thy bow, and go out to the field, and take me *some venison* ;

4 And make me savory meat, such as I love, and bring *it* to me, that I may eat ; that my soul ^d may bless thee before I die.

b Prov. 27 : 1 ; Jam. 4 : 14. c ch. 25 : 27, 28. d ver. 27 ; ch. 48 : 9, 15, and 49 : 28 ; Deut. 33 : 1.

vokes the enmity of Esau against Jacob, which leads to a further device of his mother for his departure to Mesopotamia.

1. *Isaac was old*. It is calculated that he was now one hundred and thirty-seven years old. Esau had now been married about thirty-seven years. Ishmael had been dead fourteen years. He himself did not die until forty-three years after this. (Ch. 35 : 28.) Isaac's life may be divided into three periods. During the first seventy-five years he is bound up with his father's history. During the next period from his father's death, sixty-two years, he has his more active life. And the closing period of forty-three years, during which he is blind, he passes in dreariness and retirement. ¶ *Dim so that he could not see*. Heb.—*Dim from seeing*. ¶ *Called Esau his eldest son*. Because he was his *eldest*, he overlooked all that God had said of the children before their birth, and also the fact of Esau having parted with the birthright and also the fact of Esau's ungodly connection with the Canaanites. He may not have regarded the transaction with Jacob as valid, even if he knew of it, nor may he have understood God's words, "The elder shall serve the younger," (ch. 25 : 23.) as implying the transfer of the birthright. He seems not to have concluded that Jacob was heir of the promise. Jacob and Esau are distinguished in the history as

"the upright man" (ch. 25 : 27) and "the man of the field," and Isaac prefers the latter, and that from a merely natural appetite as he loved his venison. So he gave way to a merely natural taste and desire, rather than to the spiritual. Yet he would convey the blessing according to the natural rights of the first-born. Perhaps he aims to settle thus the disputed claim.

2. *I know not*. Life was to him most uncertain, and, as he was conscious of his patriarchal relation and responsibility, he would transact this most important business of making his last will and testament.

3. The direction was to go out to the chase and bring him in such game as he loved. ¶ *Take me some venison*. Heb.—*Hunt a hunt for me*. What this hunt should be, except of the deer or gazelle, does not appear. And hence it is not surprising that kids of the flock answered the purpose when so cooked and flavored as to make a savory dish.

4. *Savory meat*. This is here a noun in the plural, and means *delicacies* or *relishes*. ¶ *That my soul may bless thee*, etc. There seems to have been some connection between this special act of service on Esau's part, and the conveyance of the blessing. Such covenant solemnities were usually associated with a meal among the Orientals, and it was probably regarded as necessary in this case. The venison (says Ka-

5 And Rebekah heard when Isaac spake to Esau his son: and Esau went to the field to hunt *for* venison, *and* to bring *it*.

6 ¶ And Rebekah spake unto Jacob her son, saying, Behold, I heard thy father speak unto Esau thy brother, saying,

7 Bring me venison, and make me savory meat, that I may eat, and bless thee before the LORD, before my death.

8 Now therefore my son, ^eobey my voice, according to that which I command thee.

9 Go now to the flock, and fetch me from thence two good kids of the goats; and I will make them ^fsavory meat for thy father, such as he loveth:

10 And thou shalt bring *it* to thy father, that he may eat, and that he ^gmay bless thee before his death.

11 And Jacob said to Rebekah his mother, Behold, ^hEsau my brother is an hairy man, and I *am* a smooth man:

12 My father peradventure will ⁱfeel me, and I shall seem to him as a deceiver; and I shall bring ^ka curse upon me, and not a blessing.

e ver. 13. f ver. 4. g ver. 4. h ch. 25: 25. i ver. 22. k ch. 9: 25; Deut. 27: 18.

lisch) is evidently like a sacrifice offered by the recipient of the blessing, and ratifying the proceedings, and hence Jacob killed and prepared *two* kids of the goats, whereas one would have been more than sufficient for an ordinary meal. This imparted to the transaction in some respects the character of a covenant, obedience on the one part and conveyance of the blessing on the other part.

5-7. Rebekah overheard this direction of Isaac, and at once she devised a scheme for securing the blessing to Jacob instead of Esau. She recognized Jacob as the birthright son, remembering God's words to her at their birth, and knowing of Esau's reckless contempt for the birthright, knowing also of Jacob's greater fitness for the privilege. But Isaac did not take her view of the case, and she would have resort to stratagem. She was the cunning mother of the cunning Jacob, and, regarding the end as right, she did not hesitate about the means, and, she felt the utmost confidence in her

success. Accordingly, while Esau was gone to the chase, she related to Jacob the order given by his father to Esau, and she added to his words so that they should indicate the most solemn and momentous transaction—"that I may bless *thee* before the Lord." Heb.—*Before Jehovah*, the redemptive name of God.

8-10. She states her plan to have Jacob fetch from the flock immediately *two kids of the goats*—good—and she would prepare them, and Jacob should present the dishes to his father and obtain the blessing in anticipation of Esau. And she had her plan well devised.

11. Jacob saw at once the risk he should run, even with his blind father. He does not object for the wrong of it, but only for the risk. If his father, being blind, should feel him, or should lay hands upon him in the ceremony, so as to feel his skin, he would detect the deceit, and give his curse instead of the blessing.

13 And his mother said unto him, ¹Upon me *be* thy curse, my son; only obey my voice, and go fetch me *them*.

14 And he went, and fetched, and brought *them* to his mother: and his mother ^mmade savory meat, such as his father loved.

• 15 And Rebekah took ⁿgoodly raiment of her eldest son Esau, which *were* with her in the house, and put them upon Jacob, her younger son:

16 And she put the skins of the kids of the goats upon his hands, and upon the smooth of his neck:

17 And she gave the savory meat and the bread, which she had prepared, into the hand of her son Jacob,

18 ¶ And he came unto his father, and said, My father. And he said, Here *am* I; who *art* thou, my son?

19 And Jacob said unto his father, *I am* Esau, thy first-born; I

• 1 ch. 43: 9; 1 Sam. 25: 24; 2 Sam. 14: 9; Matt. 27: 25. m ver. 4: 9. n ver. 27.

13. Rebekah declares herself willing to take the curse, if it should come. She was so sure that the birthright was designed by God for Jacob, that she is willing to stand between him and harm; so eager is she to have her plan carried out. If she is basing her course upon what she knew of God's will, she is acting very unjustifiably as to the means of accomplishing it. Selfishly, cunningly, dishonestly, she was undertaking to do God's work; and what seems to be based on faith is no faith, because it lacks confidence in God as able to do His own work without her dishonest agency.

14. Jacob's hesitancy was overcome by the bold assurance of his mother. He seems to have had an eye only to the chances of success, though it was in a solemn religious transaction, *before Jehovah*. He may have pleaded with himself, his mother's command, or the right he had to the birthright blessing, or the temptation may have found him unfortified by any strong moral principle, and his constitutional *supplanting* carried him away.

15, 16. *Goodly raiment*. Heb.—*The desirable garments*. The choicest

garments of Esau were put upon Jacob. It would seem from vs. 27 that there was something in the smell of the garments that would carry the odor of the field. Some suppose that this was a priestly robe worn by the elder son as priest of the household. (Ch. 49: 3.) But this is not implied in the text, though the terms used in the Greek are such as are applied to the holy garments of the priesthood, and may nere denote the desirable robes of the birthright son, *kept in the tent* as of sacred value. And though Isaac could not see them, he could identify them by the feeling.

¶ *Skins*. These skins are those of the Eastern *camel-goat*, black and silken, used also by the Romans for false hair. These were used to disguise his smooth hands and neck, and make them appear hairy as Esau's.

17–19. Jacob stands ready to do the mother's bidding in this work of deception. How his soul must have quaked, in consciousness of the fraud he was practising upon his aged father! He will find the way of transgressors to be hard. ¶ *Who art thou?* Is he not already detected? How his heart sinks at such a question. ¶ *I am Esau*. He has undertaken

have done according as thou badest me: arise, I pray thee, sit and eat of my venison, ^o that thy soul may bless me.

20 And Isaac said unto his son, How *is it* that thou hast found *it* so quickly, my son? And he said, because the LORD thy God brought *it* to me.

21 And Isaac said unto Jacob, Come near, I pray thee, that I ^p may feel thee, my son, whether thou *be* my very son Esau, or not.

22 And Jacob went near unto Isaac his father; and he felt him, and said, The voice *is* Jacob's voice, but the hands *are* the hands of Esau.

23 And he discerned him not, because his ^q hands were hairy, as his brother Esau's hands: so he blessed him.

o ver. 4. p ver 12. q ver. 16.

this wicked work, and now he is called on to lie, if he will carry it out. How one sin leads to another and another to maintain it! He feels himself to be suspected and begins to insist, so as by greater boldness to confront the suspicion. He must back up one lie by another so as not by any means to fail. He probably had a way of twisting to himself the plain statement by some secret reserve,—as that he was Esau by right,—but how could he carry it through? Plainly, he intended to deceive, and this is the essence of falsehood. OBSERVE.—Jacob uttered only one word at first. Not so Esau. (Vs. 31.)

20. Isaac's suspicion is here further expressed. Jacob has hastened so as to get the start of his brother Esau, and he is in danger of exposing the deceit by this very means. How could he so soon have returned from hunting? The answer is cunning but profane! Oh! how the man who undertakes to lie gets into deep water and mire, and must load his conscience with awful burdens of falsehood before he gets through! Here he must even bring in God Himself as having helped him to this result, when he knew that God must abhor the falsity. All this has come perhaps from a perverted conscience,

supposing that because the birthright was his, of right, and his by Divine intent, therefore he could use wicked means to secure the end. As though God could not accomplish His own plan, or as though he was not to be trusted to do it. ¶ *The Lord.* Heb. —*Jehovah thy God* (the covenant God of the patriarchs) *made to meet before me.* Onk.—*Prepared it for me.* Rather *hath brought it in my way*—hath made all the circumstances to conspire for my success.

21–23. *Come near.* Oh, what a thrill of horror must this have sent through the deceiver's soul! *Luther* says, "I should probably have run away with horror, and let the dish fall." The poor father, uneasy with suspicion, asks to feel him, whether he is his *very son Esau, or not.* Now the cunning device of his mother proves a success. If this precaution had lacked, the whole scheme would have failed. If, like Abraham, Rebekah had possessed a faith that would have even lifted the knife to slay her son at the call of duty, trusting in God to raise him up, how much happier would have been the whole company! All of them suffer for this wrong. How the deceiver is recompensed by deceits practised upon him in the beautiful

24 And he said, *Art thou my very son Esau?* And he said, *I am.*

25 And he said, Bring *it* near to me, and I will eat of my son's venison, ^r that my soul may bless thee. And he brought *it* near to him, and he did eat: and he brought him wine, and he drank.

26 And his father Isaac said unto him, Come near now, and kiss me, my son.

27 And he came near, and kissed him: and he smelled the smell of his raiment, and blessed him, and said, See ^s the smell of my son *is* as the smell of a field which the Lord hath blessed:

28 Therefore, ^t God give thee of ^u the dew of heaven, and ^w the fatness of the earth and ^x plenty of corn and wine:

r ver. 4. s Hos. 14 : 6. t Heb. 11 : 20. u Deut. 33 : 13, 28 ; 2 Sam. 1 : 21. w ch. 45 : 18. x Deut. 33 : 28.

coat of Joseph ! (Ch. 37.) ¶ *So he blessed him.* The deed was done and could not be revoked. It was not done at this instant, but after eating the venison. (Vs. 27.) OBSERVE.—How God works by various instruments, good and bad, and brings to pass His purposes by such strange links in the chain of events.

24. The father still again puts the question, and in a most pointed way, as if his suspicions were not yet utterly quieted. There seems to him something doubtful in this voice and in all the circumstances. And he asks, *Art thou my very son Esau?* as if he would put the question so pointedly as to admit of no evasion. It would seem that he knew Jacob's character for cunning; and, when one has lost confidence,—when he has forfeited his character for straightforward and honest and truthful conduct,—it is hard to put away doubt, and every little item stirs the suspicion afresh.

25, 26. The father expresses himself as satisfied at length, and is ready to partake the meal. ¶ *Kiss me.* This kiss is not asked to prove the identity of his son any further, but simply as an expression of paternal affection, and in recognition of the filial service.

27, 28. *Smelled.* To a blind man, the sense of smell is often an important means of recognizing objects. Isaac naturally enough felt of Jacob and smelled his clothes. As a man of the field, just returned from the hunt, his garments would be expected to smell of the chase—especially as, in that land, the fields are strongly scented with odors of herbs and flowers. It is common, too, in Hindoostan, to salute each other by *smelling* the crown of the head; and they speak of “the *smell* of a man's goodness.” Isaac now praises the smell of his son, as fragrant with the odors of a rich and fruitful field. ¶ *God give thee.* This brought up the association of Divine blessing in this department of his vocation as a man of the field. ¶ *The dew of heaven.* This is a chief blessing in Palestine. We learned, before landing at Beyrout, that rain would scarcely fall after the middle of March until September, and so we found it. Hence the dew is mainly depended on for necessary moisture of the fields, and these are copious. So the dew of Hermon is spoken of by the Psalmist, and the dew upon the Mountains of Zion, (Ps. 133; Deut. 33 : 13, 28,) as an evidence of the Divine blessing

29 ^y Let people serve thee, and nations bow down to thee: be lord over thy brethren, and ^z let thy mother's sons bow down to thee: ^a cursed *be* every one that curseth thee, and blessed *be* he that blesseth thee.

30 ¶ And it came to pass, as soon as Isaac had made an end of blessing Jacob, and Jacob was yet scarce gone out from the presence of Isaac his father, that Esau his brother came in from his hunting.

31 And he also had made savory meat, and brought it unto his father; and said unto his father, Let my father arise, and ^b eat of his son's venison, that thy soul may bless me.

32 And Isaac his father said unto him, Who *art* thou? And he said, I *am* thy son, thy first-born, Esau.

33 And Isaac trembled very exceedingly, and said, Who? where *is* he that hath taken venison, and brought *it* me, and I have eaten of all before thou camest, and have blessed him? yea, ^c and he shall be blessed.

34 And when Esau heard the words of his father, ^d he cried with a great and exceeding bitter cry, and said unto his father, Bless me, *even* me also, O my father!

^y ch. 9: 25, and 25: 23. ^z ch. 49: 8. ^a ch. 12: 3; Num. 24: 9. ^b ver. 4. ^c ch. 28: 3, 4; Rom. 11: 29. ^d Heb. 12: 17.

there. In addition to this, the richness (*fatness*) of the soil is of great moment as an item of prosperity; and this, along with the dew, would result in a *plenty of corn and wine*, as choice products of the soil. This accords with the exceeding fertility of the holy land. (Deut. 8: 7-9.)

29. Next to this item of blessing in the products of the earth is here added a political preëminence. The blessing rises here to the idea of universal dominion. He was to be lord not only over his brethren of kindred tribes, by his birthright claim, (vs. 37,) but also over foreign nations. The same items as in the covenant promise to Abraham—of possession of the land and of increased posterity to subjugate other people—are here. And as to blessing the nations, it is expressed in the more general terms of a curse to those who should curse him and of a blessing to those who should bless him.

This item does not rise to the full height of the Divine blessings of salvation to be conveyed to all people through him and his seed, as had been expressed in the Divine covenant blessing upon Abraham. It was only afterwards, when he found that in here pronouncing the blessing upon Jacob, contrary to what he had willed, he was made to follow the saving counsel of God, that he felt awakened in him the consciousness of his patriarchal vocation, so as to impart the blessing of Abraham to the son whom he had kept back. (Ch. 28: 3, 4.)

30-34. The sequel is now related. Jacob had scarcely left his father's presence, after the blessing had been obtained, before Esau came in from the chase with his venison. Esau prepared the dish and brought it to his father and claimed the blessing, in very similar terms to those used by Jacob. Esau must have remembered how he had parted with his

35 And he said, Thy brother came with subtilty, and hath taken away thy blessing.

36 And he said, ^e Is not he rightly named Jacob? for he hath supplanted me these two times: ^f he took away my birthright; and behold, now he hath taken away my blessing. And he said, Hast thou not reserved a blessing for me?

37 And Isaac answered and said unto Esau, ^g Behold, I have made him thy lord, and all his brethren have I given to him for servants; and ^h with corn and wine have I sustained him: and what shall I do now unto thee, my son?

38 And Esau said unto his father, Hast thou but one blessing, my father? bless me, *even* me also, O my father! And Esau lifted up his voice, ⁱ and wept.

e ch. 25: 26. f ch. 25: 33. g 2 Sam. 8: 14; ver. 29. h ver. 28. i Heb. 12: 17.

birthright to Jacob, and therefore in his conscience he could not be entirely unprepared for the discovery of his loss. Esau is too late. Isaac must have been smitten with a sense of his own sin in his carnal preference for Esau, contrary to all the indications of the Divine pleasure, and in violation of Jacob's right as acquired from Esau. He felt, too, that this patriarchal blessing was at the Divine direction and not from any personal preference, and he found himself strangely controlled and overruled by the Divine hand. ¶ *Trembled exceedingly.* Heb.—*Was horrified a great horror exceedingly.* How shocking to all his paternal feelings to have been so deceived by his own son! Yet he remembers the Divine intimations and the transfer of the birthright as looking to the same result; and the whole matter flashed upon him with strongest conviction of its fixedness in the Divine counsels, and that Jacob was to be the covenant son of Abraham and ancestor of the Messiah and propagator of Abraham's faith. ¶ *And he shall be blessed.* Heb.—*Yea, blessed he shall be.* (See Heb. 12: 17.) Esau now feels the more keenly his own fault and folly in having so

slighted his birthright and despised the privilege of the covenant blessing. Yet he found no place of repentance, (no place for his father's revoking the act,) though he sought it carefully with tears. He implored a blessing for himself also.

35, 36. The calamity of Esau is referred to Jacob's fraud practised upon him. Isaac now sees the whole case in keeping with his suspicions. Esau replies, "*Is it that they call his name Jacob* (overreacher); *for he hath overreached me these two times,*" (tripping up the heel.) Esau blames Jacob for *taking away* his birthright, though he freely bartered it for the pottage; and it is a grave question how far one has a right, even with full consent of the party, to take his property at a price far below its value—especially when advantage is taken of his necessity. How many a transaction is there which is just as wrong as theft, though it be legally binding! Is there nothing then at all left for poor Esau?

37, 38. Isaac here explains the sense of his blessing upon Jacob, and that the lordship over his brethren implied that they should be his servants, including Esau. In such

39 And Isaac his father answered and said unto him, Behold, ^kthy dwelling shall be the fatness of the earth, and of the dew of heaven from above;

40 And by thy sword shalt thou live, and ^lshalt serve thy brother; and ^mit shall come to pass when thou shalt have the dominion, that thou shalt break his yoke from off thy neck.

41 ¶ And Esau ⁿhated Jacob because of the blessing wherewith his father blessed him: and Esau said in his heart, ^oThe days of mourning for my father are at hand, ^pthen will I slay my brother Jacob.

42 And these words of Esau her elder son were told to Rebekah: and she sent and called Jacob her younger son, and said unto him, Behold, thy brother Esau, as touching thee, doth ^qcomfort himself, *purposing* to kill thee.

k ver. 28; Heb. 11: 20. l ch. 25: 23; Obad. 18, 19, 20; 2 Sam. 8: 14. m 2 Kings 8: 20. n ch. 37: 4, 8. o ch. 50: 3, 4, 10. p Obad. 10. q Ps. 64: 5.

case he finds himself perplexed, not seeing what he can do for Esau. Esau's grief here rises to the highest pitch of bitter entreaty.

39, 40. Isaac here at length pronounces the lot of Esau in a form which, as compared with the blessing upon Jacob, makes it "*a modified curse*," and which is not even described as a blessing, but introduces a disturbing element into Jacob's blessing—a retribution for the impure means by which he has obtained it. ¶ *The fatness.* Heb.—*Of or from the fatness.* The preposition is here the same as in Jacob's blessing, (vs. 28.) But there it is used in a partitive sense, after a verb of giving. Here it is used in a *privative* sense, after a noun of place, and accordingly it means, *From or without the fatness and the dew.* And this further appears from what follows: *By thy sword shalt thou live.* And Isaac had complained, also, that he had no more corn or wine to give. The sense is that Esau should have his dwelling in a country opposite to that of the covenant land in these qualities,—a wild and barren country, as it is. So said God by Malachi, (1: 3,) "I hated Esau, and

laid his mountains and his heritage waste for the dragons of the wilderness." "And thy brother thou wilt serve; yet it shall come to pass, as (*in proportion as, or when*) thou shakest (the yoke) thou shalt break his yoke from thy neck." Between Edom and Israel it was a continual alternation of rebellion, submission, and renewed subjection. OBSERVE.—Isaac is said to have uttered these words in faith concerning things to come. (Heb. 11: 20.) This prediction was spoken nine hundred years before the entire fulfilment. (See 1 Sam. 14: 47; 2 Sam. 8: 14; 2 Kings 8: 20, 22; 2 Chron. 21: 8–10.) "Conquered by Saul, subdued by David, repressed by Solomon, restrained after a revolt by Amaziah, they recovered their independence in the time of Ahab. They were incorporated into the Jewish State, and furnished it with the dynasty of princes beginning with Antipater." ¶ *Have the dominion.* Gesenius and others—*When thou shalt roam at large.*

41, 42. Esau's wrath now expressed itself in a secret resolve to slay his brother Jacob during the

43 Now therefore, my son, obey my voice : and arise, flee thou to Laban my brother ^r to Haran ;

44 And tarry with him a few days, until thy brother's fury turn away ;

45 Until thy brother's anger turn away from thee, and he forget *that* which thou hast done to him : then I will send, and fetch thee from thence. Why should I be deprived also of you both in one day ?

46 And Rebekah said to Isaac, ^a I am weary of my life, because of the daughters of Heth : ^t if Jacob take a wife of the daughters of Heth, such as these *which are* of the daughters of the land, what good shall my life do me ?

CHAPTER XXVIII.

AND Isaac called Jacob, and ^a blessed him, and charged him, and said unto him, ^b Thou shalt not take a wife of the daughters of Canaan.

r ch. 11 : 31. s ch. 26 : 35, and 28 : 8. t ch. 24 : 3. a ch. 27 : 33. b ch. 24 : 3.

days of mourning after his father's death. He would postpone his bloody act till his aged father should die. This shows the most callous and infidel disregard of the Divine arrangement to which he himself had been a party in the transfer of the birthright. Esau even expressed his purpose in words, and they were told to Rebekah. She is quick in her devices for Jacob's safety. Mother and favorite son must now suffer for their deceptive conduct. Besides, Jacob was punished in kind. He was cheated by Laban and in case of his son Joseph, and had a life of domestic trouble. *Esau comforteth himself to thee* (concerning thee) *to kill thee*.

45, 46. She seems to plan for only a brief absence so far as she states the case to Jacob. Yet she, perhaps on further reflection, arranges for a matrimonial errand. This kept her favorite twenty years absent, and perhaps she may never have seen him again. ¶ *Both in one day*. Ja-

cob, that is, would be lost through the bloody wrath of Esau, and Esau would suffer the death - penalty through the blood-avenger. ¶ *Said to Isaac*. By artfully planning this errand now, she is able to cover the worst features of the case before Isaac, and thus she makes a fair reason for Jacob's prompt departure from home.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

§ 51. JACOB'S VISION AND VOW.

Isaac, though he survived this event forty-three years, has now passed from the scene, and Jacob henceforth takes his place in the patriarchal history. Abraham is the man of active faith, Isaac is the man of passive submission, and Jacob is the man of struggling trial.

1-4. Esau had put himself out of the covenant relations and had shown his unfitness for the birthright position by his domestic alliance with

2 ^c Arise, go to ^d Padan-aram, to the house of ^e Bethuel, thy mother's father; and take thee a wife from thence of the daughters of ^f Laban thy mother's brother.

3 ^g And God Almighty bless thee, and make thee fruitful, and multiply thee, that thou mayest be a multitude of people;

4 And give thee ^h the blessing of Abraham, to thee, and to thy seed with thee; that thou mayest inherit the land ⁱ wherein thou art a stranger, which God gave unto Abraham.

5 And Isaac sent away Jacob: and he went to Padan-aram unto Laban, son of Bethuel the Syrian, the brother of Rebekah, Jacob's and Esau's mother.

6 ¶ When Esau saw that Isaac had blessed Jacob, and sent him away to Padan-aram, to take him a wife from thence; and that as he blessed him, he gave him a charge, saying, Thou shalt not take a wife of the daughters of Canaan:

7 And that Jacob obeyed his father, and his mother, and was gone to Padan-aram;

8 And Esau seeing ^k that the daughters of Canaan pleased not Isaac his father;

9 Then went Esau unto Ishmael, and took unto the wives which he had ^l Mahalath, the daughter of Ishmael, Abraham's son, ^m the sister of Nebajoth, to be his wife.

^c Hos. 12: 12. ^d ch. 25: 20. ^e ch. 22: 23. ^f ch. 24: 29. ^g ch. 17: 1, 6. ^h ch. 12: 2. ⁱ ch. 17: 8. ^k ch. 24: 3, and 26: 35. ^l ch. 36: 3. ^m ch. 25: 13.

the heathen. Isaac sees that Jacob is the covenant son of promise, and he summons him to receive his blessing and to obey his charge as to his matrimonial connection. He bade him go and take a wife from the family of Laban, his relative, and he pronounces willingly upon him, now, the blessing of "*God almighty*," "*the blessing of Abraham*," which he recognized now as falling to him by covenant right. (Ch. 17: 2; 22: 16-18.) The first item of the blessing is a numerous offspring—that thou mayest become a multitude of peoples. This term means rather a congregation or assembly of peoples, and answers to the term *ἐκκλησία* in Greek, from which also is the scriptural idea of the church—as a people called out from the world. The Greek here renders—a *synagogue* of peoples.

¶ *Inherit the land.* The second item of the covenant blessing is here the inheritance of the promised land—never overlooked—very important in God's view, as showing his hand in secular and national history. The marriage of sons seems to have been under the immediate control of the father; but Esau did not submit to this. "*The blessing of Abraham*" with all its privileges was the patriarchal covenant blessing, comprising rich spiritual benedictions and benefits.

5. Isaac is now the mover in the matter—fully alive to the importance of Jacob's errand, as the birthright son. He went to *the low-land of Aram*. Bethuel was "*the Syrian*," not as a descendant of Aram, but as a dweller in that land.

6-10. The effect of this movement upon Esau is to make him take a

10 ¶ And Jacob ⁿ went out from Beer-sheba, and went toward ^o Haran.

11 And he lighted upon a certain place, and tarried there all night, because the sun was set: and he took of the stones of that place, and put *them for* his pillows, and lay down in that place to sleep.

12 And he ^p dreamed, and behold, a ladder set up on earth, and the top of it reached to heaven: and behold, ^q the angels of God ascending and descending on it.

n Hos. 12: 12. o Acts 7: 2. p ch. 41: 1; Job 33: 15. q John 1: 51; Heb. 1: 14.

conciliatory step, and choose an additional wife from the family kindred—the house of Ishmael. He does not show any regard for the covenant relations, or he would consider the alienated position of Ishmael. Ishmael himself had been dead fourteen years. ¶ *Mahalath* is called *Bashemath* in chap. 36: 3. *Hengstenberg* thinks that all the three wives of Esau had gotten new names, when they left their own families at their marriage. Female names in the East were frequently changed. (Comp. chs. 26, 34 and 28: 9, with ch. 36: 2, 3.)

11. *He lighted upon.* The term means *he fell upon the place*, as the providential stopping-place incidentally coming upon it, or coming up to it, as the lodging place for the night. This place was about forty-eight miles from Beersheba, and eight miles north of Jerusalem, near the town of Bethel, and is defined as *the place*, from its being so well known in the history. He may have been too late to enter the city, after the time for shutting the gates, or he may not have chosen to cast himself upon the hospitality of strangers. And it was common and comfortable to sleep out in the open air, and greatly to be preferred in ordinary circumstances. It would also better accord with Jacob's feeling of loneliness at this time. He

therefore *took of the stones of that place and put* (them for) *his head-rests* or pillows. The stony nature of the place reminds travellers of this history.

12. *Dreamed.* God was pleased to reveal Himself in dreams and visions. The dream was of a ladder or stairway. As connecting earth and heaven it was a striking image of mediation and reconciliation by Him who is *the Way*. This is the New Testament explanation of it. Hereafter ye shall see heaven opened and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man. (John 1: 51.) Whether it was the vision of a common ladder or flight of steps, or whether, as some suppose, it was of a pile of mountain terraces, matters little. The flight of steps hewn in the rocky sides of the mountain near Tyre, on the edge of the Mediterranean, is called "*the ladder of Tyre.*" We traversed it with trained horses. The idea plainly is of communication opened with heaven, which had been cut off by sin. And the immediate application of it, is the providential care which is secured to him by the covenant. Angelic messengers traversing this stairway executing the gracious purposes of Redemption, (Heb. 1: 14,) and all on the basis of the mediation of Christ, the Angel of the Covenant, — this is the traveller's vision.

13 ^r And behold, the LORD stood above it, and said, ^s I am the LORD God of Abraham thy father, and the God of Isaac; ^t the land whereon thou liest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed.

14 And ^u thy seed shall be as the dust of the earth; and thou shalt spread abroad ^w to the west, and to the east, and to the north, and to the south: and in thee, and ^x in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed.

15 And behold, ^y I *am* with thee, and will ^z keep thee in all *places* whither thou goest, and will ^a bring thee again into this land: for ^b I will not leave thee, ^c until I have done *that* which I have spoken to thee of.

16 ¶ And Jacob awaked out of his sleep, and he said, Surely the LORD is in ^d this place; and I knew *it* not.

17 And he was afraid, and said, How dreadful *is* this place! this

^r ch. 35: 1, and 48: 3. ^s ch. 26: 24. ^t ch. 13: 15, and 35: 12. ^u ch. 13: 16. ^w ch. 13: 14; Deut. 12: 20. ^x ch. 12: 3, and 18: 18, and 22: 18, and 26: 4. ^y ver. 20: 21; ch. 26: 24, and 31: 3. ^z ch. 48: 16; Ps. 121: 5, 7, 8. ^a ch. 35: 6. ^b Deut. 31: 6; Josh. 1: 5; 1 Kings 8: 57; Heb. 13: 5. ^c Num. 23: 19. ^d Exod. 3: 5; Josh. 5: 15.

13. *The Lord.* Heb.—*Jehovah.* The Covenant God here called by the Redeeming Name, stood at the top, superintending all this providential scheme of grace, and this gracious scheme of Providence. He is on the throne of Grace. The grace is enthroned. The sovereignty is gracious and the grace is sovereign. Jacob's birthright privilege is here assured to him so that no wrath of Esau could deprive him of it. Jehovah stands to him in the covenant relation as the lineal successor of Abraham. He promises to him the Holy Land, the numerous offspring, (which guarantees him against Esau's rage,) and the overspreading dominion in a world-wide kingdom under the promised seed, which is Christ. And here the covenant promise reaches to the spiritual blessings to come upon *all families of the earth* by Jesus Christ.

15. The promise here comes home to his present personal case. It is "a covenant ordered in all things and sure." What could be more comforting and assuring to the lonely and trembling Jacob, than these comprehensive words—protection on

his journey and safe return to his home and success in his mission as the object of God's covenant blessing, and the presence of God with him to the end? This is a blessing fitted to Jacob's desire, as it would not have been to Esau's, and herein he is proved to be the heir of the covenant with Abraham. "This vision is thus a grand survey and summary of the history of the old covenant."—*Kurtz.*

16. *Surely the Lord*, etc. Jacob on awaking expresses his strong impression of the Divine presence in the person of Jehovah, the God of redemption. *Chald.*—*The glory of the Lord.* Such a manifestation he did not expect. It amazed him to consider it. In his loneliness and away from his sanctuary and his father's house, he had no thought of being thus met and communed with by Jehovah, in reassuring to him the covenant of His grace, which was the cherished desire of his soul. "If I had known it I would not have presumed to sleep in so holy a place."—*Jew. Com. Rashi.*

17. *How awful.* Heb.—*Nora—awe-inspiring*, commonly rendered

is none other but the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven.

18 And Jacob rose up early in the morning, and took the stone that he had put *for* his pillows, and ^eset it up *for* a pillar, ^fand poured oil upon the top of it.

19 And he called the name of ^gthat place Beth-el: but the name of that city *was called* Luz at the first.

^e ch. 31: 13, 45, and 35: 14. ^f Lev. 8: 10, 11, 12; Num. 7: 1. ^g Judg. 1: 23, 26; Hos. 4: 15.

fearful or terrible. It was so as it was, *nothing but the house of God*—the place of God's manifestation, where He revealed himself as He was wont to do in His sanctuary. ¶ *And this is the gate of Heaven*, alluding to the ladder or stairway opening to him access to the heavenly world. If it was a ladder for angels to traverse, it was also a ladder for men, the poor, humble, distressed sinner like himself. If it was a ladder for God to come down in the flesh, it was a ladder for men to go up to God, Jehovah, at the top.

18. *Early.* He was in no condition to indulge in sleep. He must be up and expressing the homage of his soul for such precious, gracious revelations. ¶ *A pillar.* The stones which he had used for a *pillow*, he now set up for a *pillar* or monument, by which to commemorate God's covenant-appearing to him. ¶ *Poured oil.* This was an ancient mode of consecration by anointing, as was the case in setting apart a man as king. (1 Sam. 10: 1.) Oil was the emblem of holiness and dignity and royal favor. Oil of consecration was called "*holy oil.*" It was also poured upon guests as a special mark of distinction. (Ps. 23: 5.) Such pillars were afterwards erected by other nations as sacred memorials and monuments and places of worship. Some have supposed that the Greeks called them *Baitulia* from this name *Bethel*, but this is not clear.

But here it was a sacred memorial merely, marking the place as a place of the Divine revealing. (Num. 7: 1.) ¶ *Bethel.* Abraham had already worshipped at this *place* and had found the name already existing. (See notes ch. 12: 8; 13: 3; 25: 30.) The historian adds: The *town* or *city* adjacent had been called *Luz* in former times. *Hävernicks* remarks, "This gives us a remarkable glimpse of the *time of the patriarch*, when the city *Luz* which certainly lay in the neighborhood of Bethel (taking that appellation in its narrowest sense) was not yet in existence—and of the *time of the narrator*, at which there was here the ancient Canaanitish city of *Luz* which we meet with in this place in the time of Joshua; so that we are here brought quite to the stand-point of the Mosaic composition of the book." *Von Gerlach* says: "Afterwards the *town* of *Luz*, which was in existence even then, received its name from this holy *spot*. Later on, God confirmed the promise here given, and the name of the place was renewed on this fresh occasion." *Kurtz* says: "The city in the immediate neighborhood was, at the time, called *Luz*. The descendants of the patriarchs transferred the name of Bethel to that city. The Canaanites not caring for this, continued to call it *Luz*, which was retained till Joshua occupied the land. Bethel the holy *place*, is distinguished from *Luz* the city."

20 ^h And Jacob vowed a vow, saying, ⁱ If God will be with me, and will keep me in this way that I go, and will give me ^k bread to eat, and raiment to put on,

21 So that ^l I come again to my father's house in peace : ^m then shall the LORD be my God :

22 And this stone which I have set *for* a pillar, ⁿ shall be God's house : ^o and of all that thou shalt give me, I will surely give the tenth unto thee.

^h ch. 31: 13; Judg. 11: 30; 2 Sam. 15: 8. ⁱ ver. 15. ^k 1 Tim. 6: 8. ^l Judg. 11: 31. ^m 2 Sam. 19: 24, 30. ⁿ Deut. 26: 17; 2 Sam. 15: 8; 2 Kings 5: 17. ^o ch. 35: 7, 14. ^o Lev. 27: 30.

20-22. Jacob's vision is properly followed up by a *vow*. Special privilege points to special duty. This was a step in advance of his predecessor in the covenant relation. It was a voluntary covenanting to God on the basis of God's covenant promise. ¶ *If God*. This is not making any condition with God, for this is only a recital of the promise, and is more properly rendered *since—inasmuch as*. It expresses no doubt or contingency. "I *if* I be lifted up," means "*as surely as I shall be lifted up*." And so here—as surely as God will be with me (has promised to be.) ¶ *Then shall*. Heb.—*And Jehovah shall be*, etc. *So surely He shall be my God*; Hengstenberg reads: "And (so surely as) he shall be my God, *my covenant God*—the same as He has been to Abraham and Isaac, *so shall this stone*. ¶ *God's house*—a place sacred to the memory of God's presence—as a place where He manifested Himself. The apostle calls the Church "the pillar and ground of the truth," alluding to this passage, (1 Tim. 3: 14.) ¶ *The tenth*. This is the prompting of his grateful heart. The Christian does not serve God in order thereby to gain heaven; but because heaven is already promised to him, he must serve God out of a lively gratitude. So here with Jacob it is the truly gospel motive. "The mention of

a tenth here after the example of Abraham, (ch: 14: 20,) is doubtless made with prospective reference to the Levitical enactments." (Lev. 27: 30, 31; Numb. 18: 24, etc; see also Deut. 14: 28, 29.) "The number *ten* expresses the idea of perfection as being the last of the cardinal numbers. Among almost all ancient people, the tenth of their goods was set apart, and very frequently as a holy offering. This was an acknowledgment that the whole was God's property and thus the possession and enjoyment of the rest was sanctified." (Comp. ch. 14: 20.) "Thus Jacob opens to God his heart, his home, and his treasure. These are the simple elements of a theocracy—a national establishment of the true religion. "As the Father is prominently manifested in regenerate Abraham, and the Son in Isaac, so also the Spirit in Jacob."

OBSERVE.—The distinct and significant use which Jacob here makes of the names of God. If *God* will be with me, as promised (or seeing He so engages) *the Lord* (Jehovah) shall be my God, and this stone shall be a house of *God*—a place of sacrifice—and I will give a tenth unto thee—(Jehovah) who appeared to him. As regards the fulfilment of this vow, we learn (ch. 35: 7) that Jacob built an altar and probably also there offered the tenth to Jehovah; or as

CHAPTER XXIX.

THEN Jacob went on his journey, ^a and came into the land of the people of the east.

2 And he looked, and behold, a well in the field, and lo, there were three flocks of sheep lying by it; for out of that well they watered the flocks: and a great stone *was* upon the well's mouth.

3 And thither were all the flocks gathered: and they rolled the stone from the well's mouth, and watered the sheep, and put the stone again upon the well's mouth in his place.

4 And Jacob said unto them, My brethren, whence *be* ye? And they said, Of Haran *are* we.

a Num. 23: 7; Hos. 12: 12.

some suppose, applied it partly to the erection and preservation of the altar, and partly to burnt and thank offerings connected with sacrificial meals.—*Keil and Delitzsch.*

CHAPTER XXIX.

§ 52. JACOB SERVES LABAN FOR LEAH AND RACHEL.

1. Jacob having received this encouragement, *went on his journey*, (Heb.—*Lifted up his feet*—(see Ps. 74: 3,) with alacrity, and *came into the land of the sons of the East*, that is Mesopotamia—east of Palestine. *Rashi*, the Jewish commentator, says, “his heart was elated, and his feet felt light.” The distance of Haran from Beersheba was about four hundred and fifty miles, and at thirty miles a day he would be fifteen days on the journey. If he reached Bethel the first night, this would be about fifty miles’ travel.

2, 3. *A well in the field.* In the pasture-grounds in the suburb of the town he came upon a well. This is not the same as where Abraham’s servant met Rebekah, but differently constructed. We found cisterns hewn out of the limestone rock, and some of these covered with a large

stone to keep the water from impurities, from interference, and from loss. The open wells also would fitly enough be covered for the safety of travellers. We came upon an open well that had overflowed, and as we saw only a pool of water and the horses were very thirsty, a gentleman who was travelling with us rode his horse into the pool to drink, and the animal stepping forward, plunged into the well, and only with the greatest difficulty was he drawn out. ¶ *Three flocks.* This accords with the Eastern custom, for shepherds to gather their several flocks at the well, at the time of watering, and thus secure greater care of the well, which was the common property of these native shepherds. This custom is described here. ¶ *They rolled.* That is, this was the custom. In this case it was done by Jacob, (vs. 20.) *Kalisch* thinks it is implied, in vs. 2, that the shepherds of the three flocks had not been able to remove the stone, and that Jacob shows himself endued with preternatural strength. The watering is done twice a day.

4–6. This natural and free questioning on Jacob’s part, indicates some confidence in his mission. ¶ *Laban, the son of Nahor*—that is, *grandson*, as he was son of Bethuel,

5 And he said unto them, Know ye Laban the son of Nahor? And they said, We know *him*.

6 And he said unto them ^b *Is he well?* And they said, *He is well:* and behold, Rachel his daughter cometh with the sheep.

7 And he said, Lo *it is* yet high day, neither *is it* time that the cattle should be gathered together: water ye the sheep, and go *and* feed *them*.

8 And they said, We cannot, until all the flocks be gathered together, and *till* they roll the stone from the well's mouth; then we water the sheep.

9 ¶ And while he yet spake with them, ^c Rachel came with her father's sheep: for she kept them.

10 And it came to pass, when Jacob saw Rachel the daughter of Laban his mother's brother, and the sheep of Laban his mother's brother, that Jacob went near, and ^d rolled the stone from the well's mouth, and watered the flock of Laban his mother's brother.

11 And Jacob ^e kissed Rachel, and lifted up his voice, and wept.

^b ch. 43; 27. ^c Exod. 2:16. ^d Exod. 2:17. ^e ch. 33:4, and 45:14, 15.

yet called *son*, according to Heb. usage. ¶ *Is he well?* Heb.—*Is there peace to him?* according to the Oriental salutation or *salaam*. ¶ *Cometh.* *Is just now coming.*

7. *High-day.* *The day* (sun) *is yet high.* Heb.—*The day is yet great*—long. He suggested that it was quite too early as yet to gather the flocks for the night, but that they should be pastured. He wished, it would seem, to have the shepherds retire that he might meet Rachel alone.

8. *We cannot.* It was not permitted, according to the rule, which needed to be rigid in so important a matter as a well for the cattle. This rule may have been made to secure a fair distribution of the water, that equal privileges might be shared, and perhaps, also, that the several shepherds might be there to roll away the stone and to replace it surely. *Till all the flocks be gathered—then they roll the stone from the mouth of the well, and we water the sheep.* The custom is thus clearly described.

9. Rachel came up while they

were in conversation. Young women very commonly attend to the sheep in the East.

10–12. Jacob's enthusiasm and ardent impulse at the sight of Rachel, displayed itself in so manly and gallant an act as is here narrated, calculated to excite her utmost admiration, and to earn for himself the kiss of friendship, at which he burst into tears. *Murphy* suggests that "the remembrance of home, and of the relationship of his mother to Rachel overpowers him." Conscious of his birthright privilege and of God's covenant relation, he made bold to announce himself, and his errand. *Kitto* says, "We begin to feel that there is much truth in this man."

12, 13. Rachel's eager, cordial reception of him, and the simplicity of her joy in carrying home the news, all remind us of Rebekah in the previous history. ¶ *Kinsman.* Heb.—*Brother of her father*, that is, *near relative*. How exciting is all this! How impossible to be quite calm at such news—that this stranger, who distinguished himself by his manner

12 And Jacob told Rachel that he *was* ^f her father's brother, and that he *was* Rebekah's son; ^g and she ran and told her father.

13 And it came to pass when Laban heard the tidings of Jacob his sister's son, that ^h he ran to meet him, and embraced him, and kissed him, and brought him to his house. And he told Laban all these things.

14 And Laban said to him, ⁱ Surely thou *art* my bone and my flesh: and he abode with him the space of a month.

15 ¶ And Laban said unto Jacob, Because thou *art* my brother, shouldest thou therefore serve me for nought? tell me, what *shall* thy wages *be*?

16 And Laban had two daughters: the name of the elder *was* Leah, and the name of the younger *was* Rachel.

17 Leah *was* tender-eyed, but Rachel *was* beautiful and well-favored.

18 And Jacob loved Rachel: and said, ^k I will serve thee seven years for Rachel thy younger daughter.

19 And Laban said, *It is better* that I give her to thee, than that I should give her to another man: abide with me.

^f ch. 13: 8, and 14: 14, 16. ^g ch. 24: 28. ^h ch. 24: 29. ⁱ ch. 2: 23; Judg. 9: 2; 2 Sam. 5: 1, and 19: 12, 13. ^k ch. 31: 41; 2 Sam. 3: 14.

(and by his retinue, doubtless,) was her near relative from a far country! What a joy had she for the dear household! *Laban* was overcome with the tidings. His running to meet him with embraces and kisses, and his taking him home, is all purely natural to the customs of the country. ¶ *All these things*—that had just now passed; not yet his full errand.

14. Laban recognizes the kindred, in strong language, to make Jacob feel at ease in his house. (Comp. ch. 2: 23 and Judges 9: 2.) ¶ *A month.* Heb.—*A month of days.* (Ch. 41: 1; Numb. 11: 20.) He remained this length of time before any fixed arrangement was made for wages.

15. *Laban* proposes a fixed contract. This may have been only to protect himself against any undue expectations of Jacob. He will pay him like an ordinary servant. *Art thou indeed my kinsman, and shouldest thou serve me for nought?* Or it

may have been in a fair and manly generosity.

16, 17. The two daughters of Laban are now mentioned and described. Rachel, the younger and more beautiful in feature and form. *Leah, tender-eyed*—*weak-eyed*, which was a blemish among Orientals. Bright eyes well lighted up was a chief beauty with them as it is this day. Heb.—*Beautiful in form and beautiful in appearance.*

18. Jacob's heart went out to Rachel. It was love, doubtless, at first sight. "Isaac loved Rebekah after she was sought and won as a bride for him. Jacob loves Rachel before he makes a proposal of marriage."—*Murphy.* Jacob was worth only his labor. Parents often received valuable presents for their daughters, as a wedding gift. Jacob could only pay by service. The daughter was not necessarily sold as a slave; but the parent received a price as a compensation for her rearing and training.

20 And Jacob ¹ served seven years for Rachel ; and they seemed unto him *but* a few days, for the love he had to her.

21 ¶ And Jacob said unto Laban, Give *me* my wife (for my days are fulfilled) that I may ^m go in unto her.

22 And Laban gathered together all the men of the place, and ⁿ made a feast.

23 And it came to pass in the evening, that he took Leah his daughter, and brought her to him ; and he went in unto her.

24 And Laban gave unto his daughter Leah, Zilpah his maid, *for* a handmaid.

25 And it came to pass, that in the morning, behold, it *was* Leah : and he said to Laban, What *is* this thou hast done unto me ? did not I serve with thee for Rachel ? wherefore then hast thou beguiled me ?

26 And Laban said, It must not be so done in our country, to give the younger before the first-born.

1 ch. 30 : 26 ; Hos. 12 : 12. m Judg. 15 : 1. n Judg. 14 : 10 ; John 2 : 1, 2.

19. This preference for a relative as the husband of his daughter is natural and according to the custom of the country at present. The agreement was concluded, and Jacob was to remain in Laban's service.

20. The seven years passed by so pleasantly to Jacob that the time seemed but a few days. A week of years was like a week to him. *Coleridge* says, "No man could be a bad man who loved as Jacob loved Rachel." Jacob's proposal may have been prompted somewhat by the need he had of remaining from home on account of his relations to Esau. By a later law the slave became free in the seventh year. (Exod. 21 : 2.)

21, 22. Jacob now demanded his wife, as his time had expired that he was to serve for her. *Laban* made a marriage feast, (of seven days,) according to the custom in such cases. (John 2 : 1.) Jacob, having no house, but being in the family of Laban, could not conduct the bride to a new home as yet.

23. According to the custom, the bride was conducted to the chamber

of the husband closely veiled, and if it was at *evening*, as in this case, the deception here named could be more easily practised. Thus it was that Jacob was punished for the deception practised upon his father by a like imposition upon himself, (vs. 25.) Thus God often punishes sin by sin, in kind if not in measure. This was a cruel cheat indeed !

24. This was an Oriental custom in the marriage of a daughter, if the father could afford it, to give the bride a female slave to be her confidential attendant. (Ch. 24 : 59-61.) This maid-servant was the most valuable dowry.

25. In the morning Jacob discovered the fraud practised upon him by the father—as Isaac his father discovered the fraud which Jacob practised upon him—when it was too late. "This is the first retribution Jacob experiences for the deceitful practices of his former days." He is not backward in complaining of the deception. He can now feel how keen must have been his father's anguish and Esau's under his over-reaching.

27 ° Fulfil her week, and we will give thee this also for the service which thou shalt serve with me yet seven other years.

28 And Jacob did so, and fulfilled her week: and he gave him Rachel his daughter to wife also.

29 And Laban gave to Rachel his daughter, Bilhah his hand-maid, to be her maid.

30 And he went in also unto Rachel, and he ^p loved also Rachel more than Leah, and served with him ^q yet seven other years.

31 And when the LORD ^r saw that Leah *was* hated, he ^s opened her womb: but Rachel *was* barren.

o Judg. 14: 12. p ver. 20; Deut. 21: 15. q ch. 30: 26, and 31: 41; Hos. 12: 12. r Ps. 127: 3. s ch. 30: 1.

26. Laban answers to Jacob's just demand that it would be contrary to the established usage to give the younger daughter in marriage prior to the elder one. But why, then, had he promised it, and never revealed this objection till the time has come for the fulfilling his promise? This custom prevails in India.

27. Laban now proposes to Jacob to give to him Rachel after the marriage feast of a week was fulfilled. Some suppose that this refers to a second marriage feast given for Rachel, and that Leah was not put upon Jacob until the close of her marriage-week. This seems to be more probably the case. This proposal was a shrewd device of Laban to bind Jacob to him for a longer period, as his service was very valuable to him. Heb.—*Fulfil the week of this one and I will give to thee also this one.* Kalisch understands that it was Leah's week that was to be fulfilled, and that then Rachel was to be given to him also. So Keil and Delitzsch: "Let Leah's marriage week pass over." (See Judg. 14: 12.) A week is the time of the marriage feast among the Arabs.

28. Jacob then received two wives in eight days. This bigamy of Jacob must not be judged of by the Mosaic law directly, which prohibits marriage with two sisters at the same

time, (Lev. 18: 18,) nor must it be set down as incest, since there was no positive law on the subject then. Only that "in the beginning it was not so." The original institution in Eden was plainly of one man and one wife, as our Lord insists. (Matt. 19: 8.)

29. Bilhah, a maid-servant of Laban, was given to Rachel for a maid. Rebekah seems to have had several maids—"damsels." (Ch. 24: 61.)

30. Jacob's preference for Rachel above Leah is here stated, as it had appeared from the first. How Jacob could so tamely have assented to the arrangement is wonderful, when he had already a legal claim for Rachel. But, by this stipulation, he gets her at once, and, though he has seven years' service to give for her, the service will seem only as so many days, now that she is his beyond any risk. A Greek sage wrote over his door, "Nothing ugly must enter." But the Scripture has said, Favor (gracefulness) is deceitful and beauty is vain; but a woman who feareth the Lord she shall be praised. Leah should not be rejected for her lack of beauty; but beauty gives to Rachel the advantage, if other qualities be the same. Gracefulness of person and of manner, without grace in the heart and life, is a cheat. OBSERVE.—Long service is made short by love.

31. *Was hated.* That is, compara-

32 And Leah conceived, and bare a son, and she called his name Reuben : for she said, Surely the LORD hath ^t looked upon my affliction : therefore my husband will love me.

33 And she conceived again, and bare a son ; and said, Because the LORD hath heard that I *was* hated, he hath therefore given me this *son* also : and she called his name Simeon.

34 And she conceived again, and bare a son ; and said, Now this time will my husband be joined unto me, because I have borne him three sons : therefore was his name called Levi.

35 And she conceived again, and bare a son ; and she said, Now will I praise the LORD : therefore she called his name ^u Judah, and left bearing.

CHAPTER XXX.

AND when Rachel saw that ^a she bare Jacob no children, Rachel ^b envied her sister ; and said unto Jacob, Give me children, ^c or else I die.

^t Exod. 3 : 7, and 4 : 31 ; Deut. 26 : 7 ; Ps. 25 : 18, and 106 : 44. ^u Matt. 1 : 2. ^a ch. 29 : 31.
^b ch. 37 : 11. ^c Job 5 : 2.

tively. She was less loved than Rachel, who was preferred to her. So God says, "I have loved Jacob and hated Esau." (Mal. 1 : 2, 3.) *The Lord* Jehovah measures out the compensations of life. Leah was also loved, but not so much as Rachel.

32. *Reuben*. This name means, *See ! a son*. The fond mother set her hope upon this event to balance the domestic relations and to give her favor in the eyes of her husband. Leah had the grace to acknowledge God's hand in her mercies.

33. *Simeon*. The depth of her affliction is expressed in this name, which means *hearing*, and implies her earnest entreaty for this blessing, as a domestic bond and conjugal tie.

34. *Levi*. This name means *attachment*, *joined*, and implies that the breach would be healed and the disunited husband and wife would be bound together by this *threefold cord* of attachment.

35. Now her grief was turned to *praise*. *Judah* means *praise*, a sort

of hallelujah, at his birth. Her noble nature was evinced in all this devout feeling, bearing patiently her loads, and hoping in God under affliction. What was personal beauty as a charm in comparison of such a character ? The sense of some of these names was wonderfully changed in the after history. Judah may well be the occasion of *praise* ; for he becomes "the ancestor of the promised seed. It is remarkable that the wife of priority, but not of preference, is the mother of the seed in whom all nations are to be blessed. Levi, the reconciler, is the father of the priestly tribe. Simeon is attached to Judah. Reuben retires into the background."—*Murphy*.

CHAPTER XXX.

§ 53. JACOB'S INCREASE AND PROSPERITY.

Besides the first four sons by Leah, Jacob has also two sons by Leah's

2 And Jacob's anger was kindled against Rachel; and he said, *Am I in God's stead, who hath withheld from thee the fruit of the womb?*

3 And she said, Behold ^e my maid Bilhah, go in unto her; and she shall bear upon my knees, ^g that I may also have children by her.

4 And she gave him Bilhah her handmaid ^h to wife: and Jacob went in unto her.

5 And Bilhah conceived, and bare Jacob a son.

6 And Rachel said, God hath ⁱ judged me, and hath also heard my voice, and hath given me a son: therefore called she his name Dan.

7 And Bilhah, Rachel's maid, conceived again, and bare Jacob a second son.

^d ch. 16: 2; ¹ Sam. 1: 5. ^e ch. 16: 2. ^f ch. 50: 23; Job 3: 12. ^g ch. 16: 2. ^h ch. 16: 3, and 35: 22. ⁱ Ps. 35: 24, and 43: 1; Lam. 3: 59.

maid, and two sons by Rachel's maid, and also three children by Leah, and one son (Joseph) by Rachel. He then proposes to return to Canaan. But Laban again retains him upon terms which by a skilful management yield him a large return.

1. Rachel also has her troubles, and finds herself, with all her beauty, at disadvantage. This leads to an envying of Leah. She would have exchanged places with her, it may be. She burst into a fit of impatience, which provoked anger in Jacob. The maternal relation is counted a great glory in Oriental countries, and a childless marriage is regarded as a shame and calamity. Rachel reproaches her husband and says to him, *Give me children, and if not, I die*, shall be regarded as dead, (ch. 20: 3,) or die of mortification. The hope of Hebrew mothers was that they might give birth to the promised Seed. How different is Rachel's conduct from Rebekah's in like circumstances, (ch. 25: 22,) and from Hannah's, (1 Sam. 1: 11.)

2. Jacob being angry replied to her, "*Whether instead of God am I? Who hath withheld from thee the fruit of the womb?*" (See ch. 50: 19.) Could Jacob give what God had

pleased to withhold? Instead of complaining to him, she ought to have inquired of God. Little did she know that she should die in giving birth to a child. (Ch. 37: 16-19.)

Though this is recorded after the record of Leah's fourth son, yet Rachel had probably discovered her own case, and given her maid to Jacob before this. Dan may have been before Judah, and also Naphtali not long after him.—(See *Keil* and *Delitzsch*.)

3. Rachel's plan was not an uncommon one at the East. This was Sarah's course, (ch. 16: 2.) In such cases it was regarded as substitutionary for the mother, and was called bearing upon the mother's knees, she thus promising to recognize the offspring as her own.

4, 5. Hence, by this arrangement Bilhah is called his wife. There was no positive law against this, though it was impliedly against nature and Scripture. Such children were sometimes treated as on a level with the legal children, or as, in case of Ishmael, they were held as inferior and dependent on the parent's pleasure, to send away if he chose. (Ch. 21:10.)

6, 7. *Judged me*. She here confessed God's righteous dealing in

8 And Rachel said, with great wrestlings have I wrestled with my sister, and I have prevailed: and she called his name ^k Naphtali.

9 When Leah saw that she had left bearing, she took Zilpah, her maid, and ^l gave her Jacob to wife.

10 And Zilpah, Leah's maid, bare Jacob a son.

11 And Leah said, A troop cometh, and she called his name Gad.

12 And Zilpah, Leah's maid, bare Jacob a second son.

13 And Leah said, Happy am I, for the daughters ^m will call me blessed: and she called his name Asher.

14 ¶ And Reuben went in the days of wheat-harvest, and found mandrakes in the field, and brought them unto his mother Leah. Then Rachel said to Leah, ⁿ Give me, I pray thee, of thy son's mandrakes.

15 And she said unto her, ^o Is it a small matter that thou hast taken my husband? and wouldest thou take away my son's mandrakes also? And Rachel said, Therefore he shall lie with thee to-night for thy son's mandrakes.

16 And Jacob came out of the field in the evening, and Leah went out to meet him, and said, Thou must come in unto me; for surely I have hired thee with my son's mandrakes. And he lay with her that night.

k Matt. 4: 13. l ver. 4. m Prov. 31: 28; Luke 1: 48. n ch. 25: 30. o Num. 16: 9, 13.

withholding hitherto, and his gracious judgment in now granting what she besought. *Dan* means *judge* or *judging*. Jacob and Rachel use in this passage the common noun "God,"—the Everlasting and therefore the Almighty,—who rules in the physical relations of things: a name suitable to the occasion.

8. *Wrestlings*. Heb.—*Struggles of God have I struggled with my sister*, that is, *mighty struggles*. She regarded the withholding of children as evidence of her lacking God's favor; and she had been led to wrestlings of prayer to God for the blessing, as between herself and her sister, and she had *prevailed*. She now regarded the conflict as decided to her advantage. So *Heng. Del.* etc. ¶ *Naphtali*—*my conflict*. Rachel speaks of *Elohim* only. Leah refers her four sons to the gift of *Jehovah*, the God of redemption, and thus shows her recognition of the cove-

nant blessing. Leah was shown to be the wife of God's appointment, as "the tribe-mother of the greater part of the covenant nation."

9, 10. Leah now resorted to the same expedient as Rachel had used for further enlarging her household. It was probably after a year's interval.

11. *A troop*. Gerlach reads, *With good fortune*. Kalisch—*In felicity*. So most of the early versions. So the *Greek* and *Vulg.* Jacob interprets the name (ch. 49: 19,) as a *troop*—or *victory cometh*. "She too claims a victory."—*Murphy*.

13. *Happy am I*. Heb.—*In my happiness, for the daughters will call me blessed* who am so rich in sons. ¶ *Asher*, which means *happy* or *blessed*.

14. *Mandrakes*—*love-apples*. These were known to possess an exciting quality. Rachel is intent on applying the expedients in which she was so fruitful, rather than patiently wait-

17 And God hearkened unto Leah, and she conceived, and bare Jacob the fifth son.

18 And Leah said, God hath given me my hire, because I have given my maiden to my husband: and she called his name Issachar.

19 And Leah conceived again, and bare Jacob the sixth son.

20 And Leah said, God hath endued me *with* a good dowry; now will my husband dwell with me, because I have borne him six sons: and she called his name ^p Zebulun.

21 And afterwards she bare a daughter, and called her name Dinah.

22 ¶ And God ^a remembered Rachel, and God hearkened to her, and ^r opened her womb.

23 And she conceived, and bare a son; and said, God hath taken away ^s my reproach:

24 And she called his name Joseph; and said, ^t The LORD shall add to me another son.

25 ¶ And it came to pass, when Rachel had borne Joseph, that Jacob said unto Laban, ^u Send me away, that I may go unto mine own place, and to my country.

^p Matt. 4: 13. ^q ch. 8: 1; 1 Sam. 1: 19. ^r ch. 29: 31. ^s 1 Sam. 1: 6; Isai. 4: 1; Luke 1: 25. ^t ch. 35: 17. ^u ch. 24: 54, 56. ^v ch. 18: 33, and 31: 55.

ing upon God. Leah was willing to let go the mere carnal means which would take the matter out of God's hand, and she would pray and trust in Him. (See Sol. Song 7: 13.)

17, 18. *Hearkened*, implying that Leah prayed, and she has again the advantage of Rachel with all her expedients. ¶ *My hire*. That for which she hired her husband with the mandrakes. She recognized God as giving to her that for which she had parted with the mandrakes, and for which she had given her maid to her husband. Not as a reward for giving her maid, but God had rewarded her with the offspring, to procure which she had given her maid. ¶ *Issachar*. *It is a reward*. Heb.—*Yesh* (yes) *sakar*.

20. *God hath endowed*. Heb.—*Hath presented me with a goodly present*. Six sons constituted a strong ground of hope in her husband's fast affection, and she embodied the hope

in this son's name. ¶ *Zebulun—a dwelling*.

21. *Dinah*, meaning *judgment*, from the same root as *Dan*. This is the only daughter of Jacob mentioned, and *that* on account of her connection with the history of Jacob. (Ch. 34.)

22, 23. *Remembered*, with favor after having tried her with His disciplinary dealing. ¶ *My reproach*. (See Luke 1: 25; 1 Sam. 1: 6.)

24. *Joseph*. Heb.—*He will add*, or *may He add*. She now uses the redemptive name of God. Benjamin was added afterwards. The birth of Joseph was after the fourteen years were ended.

25. Jacob now proposed to return to his home, having filled out the second period of seven years. He has now reached fourscore and ten years of age, and as the birthright son he must have a heart for the land of promise which was guaran-

26 Give *me* my wives and my children, ^x for whom I have served thee, and let me go: for thou knowest my service which I have done thee.

27 And Laban said unto him, I pray thee, if I have found favor in thine eyes, ^y *tarry*; for I have learned by experience that the LORD hath blessed me ^z for thy sake.

28 And he said, ^a appoint me thy wages, and I will give *it*.

29 And he said unto him, ^b Thou knowest how I have served thee, and how thy cattle was with me.

30 For *it was* little which thou hadst before I *came*, and it is *now* increased unto a multitude; and the LORD hath blessed thee since my coming: and now, when shall I ^c provide for mine own house also?

31 And he said, What shall I give thee? And Jacob said, Thou shalt not give me any thing. If thou wilt do this thing for me, I will again feed *and* keep thy flock:

^x ch. 29: 20, 30. ^y ch. 39: 3, 5. ^z ch. 26: 24. ^a ch. 29: 15. ^b ch. 31: 6, 38, 39, 40; Matt. 24: 45; Tit. 2: 10. ^c 1 Tim. 5: 8.

teed to him and to his seed. Besides he longs to see his parents again, and he has been detained in Mesopotamia so much longer than he had planned, no wonder that he seeks now to return to Canaan and provide for his own family. See Heb. 13: 14, where his faith in this is recognized and recorded. ¶ *Send me away.* Give me the facilities for the journey.

26. Jacob claims now his right according to the contract which he had faithfully fulfilled.

27. Laban urges him to remain in his service, because he had noticed how Jacob was the object of Divine favor, and valuable to him for his experience and fidelity. ¶ *Learned.* This verb, taken from the noun which means a serpent, denotes a shrewd and searching observation. This is a high compliment to Jacob. Men of the world often see that the good and pious are a benefit to them, and they prefer such for servants and employees. They often receive temporal benefits of such pious associations and relationships in life.

28. Laban will now engage Jacob on his own terms, or so at least he proposes, and will draw him into negotiation. ¶ *Appoint.* Heb.—*De-note or mark down thy hire upon me.*

29, 30. Jacob thinks it only fair and just to remind Laban of the substantial benefit which he has derived from his services already, as his flocks and herds would show, and he makes this a reason for his now being released, as Laban made it a reason for his being retained. Especially he claims to look after his own household interests now, after bringing so much wealth to Laban. ¶ *Increased.* Heb. *Broken forth.* ¶ *Since my coming.* Heb.—*To my foot*—in my path, or for my service—under my management.

31. Laban again asks only for Jacob's terms—to have him name a price for his services. Jacob names the condition on which he would agree to remain.

32. Jacob's proposition is distinctly made. *I will pass through all thy flocks to-day to remove from thence every speckled and spotted sheep, and*

32 I will pass through all thy flock to-day, removing from thence all the speckled and spotted cattle, and all the brown cattle among the sheep, and the spotted and speckled among the goats: and ^d of such shall be my hire.

33 So shall my ^e righteousness answer for me in time to come, when it shall come for my hire before thy face: every one that is not speckled and spotted among the goats, and brown among the sheep, that shall be counted stolen with me.

34 And Laban said, Behold, I would it might be according to thy word.

35 And he removed that day the he-goats that were ring-streaked and spotted, and all the she-goats that were speckled and spotted, and every one that had some white in it, and all the brown among the sheep, and gave them into the hands of his sons.

36 And he set three days' journey betwixt himself and Jacob: and Jacob fed the rest of Laban's flocks.

37 And ^f Jacob took him rods of green poplar, and of the hazel

d ch. 21: 8. e Ps. 37: 6. f ch. 31: 9-12.

very brown sheep among the lambs and the spotted and speckled among the goats, and it shall be my hire. This would fairly imply that the spotted ones, thus separated, should be Jacob's wages. Nothing was said about the future, though it was meant by Jacob and understood by Laban, as would seem, and would be included in the contract. Laban undertook the separation himself to make more sure, and then gave those which were set apart as Jacob's wages to his own sons to tend, since it was Jacob's duty to take care of Laban's flock, and so as to prevent any copulation between the animals of the two flocks.—*Keil and Delitzsch*. It is more commonly understood, (as *Murphy*,) that Jacob was not to have the spotted sheep already in the flock, but that they were first to be removed, and he was to start with nothing, and have only such as should be hereafter brought forth of that spotted kind. Jacob was willing to trust to Providence, with an artful use of the means which his experience furnished him. And the bargain would nat-

urally seem to Laban to be largely in his own favor, and the chances would be also on his side, as the sheep were most commonly white and the goats brown or black in that country. Laban, therefore, readily agrees.

33. *My righteousness*. That is, my honesty will be vindicated, as the color will show for itself, and there can be no suspicion of fraud, when the time shall come for settlement. This implies that there was to be a time of separation and settlement, and at such time he would retain only such as should be spotted, and any others should be counted as not his property of right, but as *stolen* property. ¶ *In time to come*. Heb. —*In day to-morrow*—in future time.

34-36. Laban assents to this proposal. The separation was immediately made.

37-39. Jacob now practises a skillful expedient for securing a large share of the product of the flocks. This was not in the contract; yet he deemed it only a fair advantage of his superior experience and tact in

and chestnut tree; and pilled white streaks in them, and made the white appear which *was* in the rods.

38 And he set the rods which he had pilled before the flocks in the gutters, in the watering-troughs when the flocks came to drink; that they should conceive when they came to drink.

39 And the flocks conceived before the rods, and brought forth cattle ring-streaked, speckled, and spotted.

40 And Jacob did separate the lambs, and set the faces of the flocks toward the ring-streaked, and all the brown in the flock of Laban: and he put his own flocks by themselves, and put them not unto Laban's cattle.

41 And it came to pass whensoever the stronger cattle did conceive, that Jacob laid the rods before the eyes of the cattle in the gutters, that they might conceive among the rods.

42 But when the cattle were feeble, he put *them* not in: so the feebler were Laban's, and the stronger Jacob's.

the raising of sheep. As an offset to the great disadvantage with which he started, he made use of this cunning method to get his fair share. Heb.—*He peeled the white bare in the rods.* He *pilled* or peeled off the bark of twigs of different trees, which were very white under the bark, so that they would be speckled and ring-streaked; and, having noticed that the young brought forth would be determined in color by such colors as were set before the eyes of the dams when they conceived, he adopted this plan of placing the speckled rods before them in the watering troughs. The plan was successful. Providence was on the side of Jacob in this matter, and he attributes the success of his plan to God. (Ch. 31: 11, 12.) Yet the bargain was not made by Laban, with any such understanding that secret and extra means would be resorted to. Here is Jacob's craft and cunning, which cannot be justified in itself, or as a pattern and rule of action. Some have held that there was a miraculous interposition in Jacob's favor, as intimated ch. 31: 5-13. As regards the morality, however, Jacob seems to have bar-

gained with his secret scheme in view, and consulted only his own interest and avarice, the effect of which was to secure to himself a large portion of the flocks. Laban, discovering this, regarded himself as released from the compact, and changed the terms time after time. This loss to Laban was only a providential punishment for his exaction of Jacob's service those fourteen years. But Jacob was guilty in relying more upon craft than upon the covenant of God.

40. This further scheme was to the same effect; so that the white sheep might have the speckled and brown ones constantly in view, and the product of the fold might be determined thereby, so as to give him constantly new additions of the spotted ones. ¶ *Put them not.* He kept these speckled flocks apart so as to get more of the same sort. *Kalisch* translates thus: "And he set the faces of (Laban's) flocks toward (his own) ring-streaked, and all (his) dark (he set) to the flocks of Laban; and he put his own flocks by themselves, and did not put them to Laban's cattle."

41, 42. He managed also to get

43 And the man ^g increased exceedingly, and ^h had much cattle, and maid-servants, and men-servants, and camels, and asses.

CHAPTER XXXI.

AND he heard the words of Laban's sons, saying, Jacob hath taken away all that *was* our father's; and of *that* which *was* our father's hath he gotten all this ^a glory.

2 And Jacob beheld ^b the countenance of Laban, and behold, it *was* not ^c toward him as before.

3 And the LORD said unto Jacob, ^d Return unto the land of thy fathers, and to thy kindred: and I will be with thee.

4 And Jacob sent and called Rachel and Leah to the field unto his flock,

5 And said unto them, ^e I see your father's countenance, that it is not toward me as before: but the God of my father ^f hath been with me.

^g ver. 30. ^h ch. 13: 2, and 24: 35, and 26: 13, 14. ^a Ps. 49: 16. ^b ch. 4: 5. ^c Deut. 28: 54. ^d ch. 28: 15, 20, 21, and 32: 9. ^e ver. 2. ^f ver. 3.

the stronger ones for himself and the feebler ones for Laban; so as in every way to take all possible advantage, without absolutely grasping the whole, and exciting the suspicion of Laban. The trouble is yet to come upon Jacob. ¶ *Increased.* Heb.—*Brake forth exceedingly.* On all sides his prosperity was enlarged.

CHAPTER XXXI.

§ 54. JACOB'S RETURN TO CANAAN.

An occasion had now come for Jacob's departure.

1. *He heard.* How often what a man *hears* said of him determines his course in life! This was probably a report to him of what his cousins had said, as they were three days' journey distant. They were dissatisfied with Jacob's large share of the flocks, and no wonder. He had gotten so much of their father's property, and

all with nothing of his own to start with, that they are incensed, and intimate that there must be the *over-reaching* of Jacob in it all.

2. Laban was also plainly displeased with Jacob. His countenance (lit.) *was not towards him as yesterday* (and) *the day before.*

3, 4. *The Lord.* Jehovah gave him, now, express direction to go to his paternal home. He called his wives, the daughters of Laban, and explained to them the whole case, and appeals to their knowledge of the facts, and declares the favor of God towards him. OBSERVE.—(1.) The case is clear for his return when God so commands. (2.) He shows himself to be a kind and faithful husband.

5. The manifest alienation of Laban from him, added to the bitter reproaches of Laban's sons, are now mentioned to Rachel and Leah to justify the departure for Canaan. Jacob looks to the Divine covenant, and regards his prosperity in such

6 And ^gye know that with all my power I have served your father.

7 And your father hath deceived me, and ^hchanged my wages ⁱten times: but God ^ksuffered him not to hurt me.

8 If he said thus, ^lThe speckled shall be thy wages; then all the cattle bare speckled; and if he said thus, The ring-streaked shall be thy hire; then bare all the cattle ring-streaked.

9 Thus God hath ^mtaken away the cattle of your father, and given *them* to me.

10 And it came to pass at the time that the cattle conceived, that I lifted up mine eyes, and saw in a dream, and behold, the rams which leaped upon the cattle *were* ring-streaked, speckled, and grizzled.

^g ver 33, 39, 40, 41; ch. 30: 29. ^h ver. 41. ⁱ Num. 14: 22; Neh. 4: 12; Job 19: 3; Zech. 8: 23. ^k ch. 20: 6; Ps. 105: 14. ^l ch. 30: 32. ^m ver. 1, 16.

adverse circumstances as the mark of Divine favor. He says nothing of his own cunning, of which he may well be ashamed.

6. He appeals to his wives in regard to his fidelity in serving Laban. ¶ *With all my power.* That is, of course, within the terms of the contract. The last arrangement with Laban had allowed him, during the latter six years, some opportunity of providing for himself.

7. He complains of Laban's deceiving him, yet he was himself guilty of practising deceit upon Laban. OBSERVE.—How often men reprove in others the very wrong of which they are guilty themselves. Often, God punishes sin in kind, allowing the deceiver to be deceived, etc. ¶ *Ten times.* This is probably to be understood as a round number, meaning any number of times—as often as he could. The changes are not mentioned, but consisted probably in the color from speckled to ring-streaked and again to grizzled. (Vs. 8; ch. 30: 28–39.) ¶ *God suffered him not.* Jacob must confess that Laban would have gotten the better of him but for God's covenant help. OBSERVE.—He puts the best face on his matters in this statement

to his wives, and hence says nothing of his own artifice.

8, 9. How this came to pass, he here narrates with great simplicity,—that whatever change Laban made to take advantage of him, God interfered accordingly in the result for Jacob's benefit. Hence it was God who took the cattle from Laban, and gave them to him.

10. Jacob was confirmed in this view by what appeared to him in a dream, after he had made the bargain with Laban, and at the critical time when the result was pending. This dream was intended to assure Jacob of the Divine power and grace on his behalf; and the effect of it should have been to make him trust in the God of the covenant. But, instead of this, he resorted to his cunning and craft, probably beyond the legitimate use of the means. So it had been in getting by deceit the birthright, after God signified that it should be his. OBSERVE.—How much policy and scheming to carry out important ends would be spared, if there were a proper reliance upon God. God did not authorize any of Jacob's strategy to do the work which God had promised to do, and He did not need the aid of Jacob's craft.

11 And ⁿ the angel of God spake unto me in a dream, *saying*, Jacob : And I said, Here *am* I.

12 And he said, Lift up now thine eyes and see, all the rams which leap upon the cattle *are* ring-streaked, speckled, and grizzled : for ^o I have seen all that Laban doeth unto thee.

13 I *am* the God of Beth-el, ^p where thou anointedst the pillar, *and* where thou vowedst a vow unto me : now, ^q arise, get thee out from this land, and return unto the land of thy kindred.

14 And Rachel and Leah answered, and said unto him, ^r *Is there* yet any portion or inheritance for us in our father's house ?

15 Are we not counted of him strangers ? for ^s he hath sold us, and hath quite devoured also our money.

ⁿ ch. 48 : 16. ^o Exod. 3 : 7. ^p ch. 28 : 18, 19, 20. ^q ver. 3 ; chap. 32 : 9. ^r ch. 2 : 24.
^s ch. 29 : 15, 17.

11, 12. Beyond the dream, there came an express revelation from *the Angel of God*. This may refer to the same occasion or to a further and fuller dream afterwards, accompanied by the Divine assurance. And the ground is here stated of God's intervention on his behalf. "*For I have seen.*" All this was calculated to confirm Jacob's faith in his Covenant God. *Delitzsch* thinks the vision was given to Jacob after the event, to explain to him that it was not his stratagem but the providence of God that foiled Laban's overreaching. *Kurtz* thinks that it was given to him in advance, to teach him that the help of God, without any such self-help, could procure him justice and safety as against Laban's craftiness.

13. God reminds him of his covenant relations and of the covenant history. ¶ *The God of Bethel*. This refers him back to the promise there made, (ch. 28 : 13-15,) and to the vow there offered, (ch. 28 : 20-22.) It is the same "Angel of the Covenant" who has been with him, and now encourages him for the future ; even for all the perils and trials of his return home.

14. His wives having heard these

statements express themselves as despairing of any further good from their father's house, and ready to give it up in disgust. So, 1 Kings 12 : 16, "What *portion* have we in David, or *inheritance* in the Son of Jesse ? To your tents, O Israel." They had no longer any part nor lot in the paternal estate.

15. The father had treated them as if they had been strangers, trying to make the most gain out of them, instead of dealing with them as daughters. Lit. *And he has even constantly devoured our money* (silver.) Besides making merchandise of us, *he has consumed the property brought to him by our service*,—that is,—of Jacob, whose service was in lieu of a dowry which would fairly have been theirs. These accusations with which the wives readily follow up the charges of Jacob, are not well grounded, because they had no portion nor inheritance to expect, where there were sons to inherit as here, nor was it true that they had received no dowry, for each had received an handmaid, and Laban had kept them and their families during seven years. Yet in all such cases of complaint there are two sides to the matter.

16 For all the riches which God hath taken from our father, that is ours, and our children's: now then, whatsoever God hath said unto thee, do.

17 ¶ Then Jacob rose up, and set his sons and his wives upon camels;

18 And he carried away all his cattle, and all his goods which he had gotten, the cattle of his getting, which he had gotten in Padan-aram; for to go to Isaac his father in the land of Canaan.

19 And Laban went to shear his sheep: and Rachel had stolen the *images* that *were* her father's.

20 And Jacob stole away unawares to Laban the Syrian, in that he told him not that he fled.

21 So he fled with all that he had; and he rose up, and passed over the river, and ^u set his face *toward* the mount Gilcad.

22 And it was told Laban on the third day, that Jacob was fled.

23 And he took ^x his brethren with him, and pursued after him seven days' journey: and they overtook him in the mount Gilead.

t ch. 35: 2. u ch. 46: 28; 2 Kings 12: 17; Luke 9: 51, 53. x ch. 13: 8.

16. They boast themselves therefore, in having secured something from the grasp and greed of their father, so as not to be wholly destitute. And they are ready to indorse his plans as already intimated, especially as those plans are directed by God.

17-19. Jacob now makes all his formal preparations for journeying to Canaan. His family and goods, servants and cattle, form an encampment, as is still the custom in the migration of a family or tribe. We have seen such travelling companies in Palestine, and the description here annexed answers to the customs of the present day. ¶ *Shear his sheep.* Jacob wisely took this opportunity, in Laban's absence, to leave, knowing that if his plans were discovered before he was gone, he would be prevented from carrying them out. Rachel also *stole the teraphim, which* (belonged to) *her father.* These (rendered images, idols, teraphim) were household divinities of heathen, idolatrous worship, consulted as oracles. They were sometimes images of ancestors. (1 Sam. 19: 13.) The Romans

had them, (Penates, tutelary deities,) guardians of the household, so regarded. Some of these figures among the Romans were miniature casts of boys, with short tunic, and with cornucopia on the head. Others were of hooded graybeards. Others were mere heads and busts, and they were made of metal or of terra-cotta; their place was the chimney-corner. Incense was even offered to them among the Romans. (*Barker's Lares and Penates.*) These images were found even in David's house, and their use was regarded for a time as not distinctly idolatrous; yet Josiah rooted them out. (2 Kings 23: 24.) Rachel's object was either probably to prevent her father consulting these as to their flight, which would imply that she believed in them, or to have them as family memorials, or possibly as guardians of their journey home. (See 2 Kings 13: 24; 1 Sam. 15: 23; Zech. 10: 2; Hosea 3: 4.) This was done without Jacob's knowledge (vs. 32.)

20-23. Jacob fairly succeeded in getting away without Laban's knowl-

24 And God ^y came to Laban the Syrian in a dream by night, and said unto him, Take heed that thou ^z speak not to Jacob either good or bad.

25 ¶ Then Laban overtook Jacob. Now Jacob had pitched his tent in the mount: and Laban with his brethren pitched in the mount of Gilead.

26 And Laban said to Jacob, What hast thou done, that thou hast stolen away unawares to me, and ^a carried away my daughters, as captives *taken* with the sword?

27 Wherefore didst thou flee away secretly, and steal away from me, and didst not tell me, that I might have sent thee away with mirth, and with songs, with tabret, and with harp?

28 And hast not suffered me ^b to kiss my sons and my daughters? ^c thou hast now done foolishly in *so* doing.

^y ch. 20: 3; Job 33: 15; Matt. 1: 20. ^z ch. 24: 50. ^a 1 Sam. 30: 2. ^b ver. 55; Ruth 1: 9, 14; 1 Kings 19: 20; Acts 20: 37. ^c 1 Sam. 13: 13; 2 Chron. 16: 9.

edge. His time had fully expired and he was at liberty to go if he pleased. He however again practised his wily arts, *and stole away*. Heb.—*Deceived the heart of Laban*. ¶ *Mount Gilead*. He aimed for the south part of Palestine. Therefore he crossed the Euphrates, and travelled in a south-western course toward the Mount Gilead, (vs. 21,) the mountain range known by that name, and running north and south through the territory of Reuben, Gad, and the south part of Manasseh. (See vs. 48.) It was not till the *third day* that Laban received information of the flight. And Jacob already had well the start; but cumbered with his flocks and family, he could be overtaken by swift pursuers. *Laban* set out on the fourth day, it would seem, and overtook Jacob on the seventh day of the pursuit. But as he would require two days at least to reach his home from his absence of three days' journey, Jacob would have the start by five days, and a seven days' pursuit would give twelve days for the travel of over three hundred English miles. ¶ *His brethren*,—his *kindred*, and the servants or adherents. It was not till the Mount

Gilead was reached that Jacob's company was overtaken.

24. Laban, doubtless full of wrath, was met in a night-dream by God, who charged him not to speak to Jacob *either good or bad*. Heb.—*From good to bad*. This is not the same as in ch. 24: 50. Here it means to avoid getting into a rage; to abstain from words which would lead to bad results—from words to blows. *Keil* and *Delitzsch* understand thus: "not to say anything decisive and emphatic for the purpose of altering what had already occurred," (vs. 29.) Sept.—*Anything evil to Jacob*. Vulg.—*Anything harshly against Jacob*. Bish. Bible—*Speak not to Jacob aught save good*. Mark his language when they meet. (Vs. 26–30.)

26–28. Laban begins with some sharpness, accusing Jacob of stealing away like a thief, and of acting like a thief, with his daughters as booty. He repeats the tart questioning, and charges him with gross unkindness in thus denying to him the opportunity of paternal leave-taking. He intimates that he would surely have given them a handsome farewell with music such as was used to mark great festal occasions. And that he would

29 It is in the power of my hand to do you hurt; but the ^a God of your father spake unto me ^e yesternight, saying, Take thou heed that thou speak not to Jacob either good or bad.

30 And now, *though* thou wouldest needs be gone, because thou sore longedst after thy father's house; *yet* wherefore hast thou ^f stolen my gods?

31 And Jacob answered and said to Laban, Because I was afraid: for I said, Peradventure thou wouldest take by force thy daughters from me.

32 With whomsoever thou findest thy gods, ^g let him not live; before our brethren discern thou what *is* thine with me, and take *it* to thee: for Jacob knew not that Rachel had stolen them.

33 And Laban went into Jacob's tent, and into Leah's tent, and into the two maid-servants' tents; but he found *them* not. Then went he out of Leah's tent, and entered into Rachel's tent.

34 Now Rachel had taken the images, and put them in the cam-

d ver. 53; ch. 28: 13. e ver. 24. f ver. 19; Judg. 18: 24. g ch. 44: 9.

have desired to kiss them a good-bye, as a tender and fond father. But this did not well comport with his conduct towards them while they were at home. He throws the whole blame, of course, upon Jacob, and takes no share to himself. The musical instruments of the Hebrews we know very little of, only that they were very rude and harsh. ¶ *Tâbret—timbrel*—a kind of drum or tambourine. (Judg. 11: 34.)

29. Laban asserts his superior power which puts Jacob at his mercy, but he refers to the appearing of God to him warning him against violence. ¶ *In the power of my hand.* Heb.—*There is to God my hand.*—Keil and Delitzsch. My hand serves me as God. (Mic. 2: 1; Deut. 28: 32; Neh. 5: 5.) The power lies in my hand. It is entirely within my ability, or my reach. How such proud, vindictive boasts give vent to the passion. I could crush you if I pleased, or if God had not forbidden.

30-32. Even if thy stealthy departure can be explained, why did you steal my gods? Laban now

acknowledges how naturally Jacob would wish to return to his home, yet he comes down upon him with a positive charge of theft—of sacrilege! ¶ *My gods.* Laban should have been ashamed of such heathen images; and Jacob surely did not want them—would not have them as a gift—would sooner throw them out of his house. He answers the charges, therefore, in order. As to the hasty and covert departure, it was because he was afraid of being stopped and of having his wives forcibly wrested from him by their father. But as to the idols, he knows nothing of any such in his possession. He repels the charge boldly, and is willing that if they be found on any of the company, such an one should suffer death. He would cheerfully be searched and give up anything that Laban could find of his property. Jacob was ignorant of the theft.

34. Rachel had hidden these teraphim *in the furniture (litter) of the camel, and sat upon them.* Kitto, thinks that it was under the common pack-saddle of the camel, which is high, and shaped so as to suit the

el's furniture, and sat upon them. And Laban searched all the tent, but found *them* not.

35 And she said to her father, Let it not displease my lord that I cannot ^h rise up before thee; for the custom of women *is* upon me. And he searched, but found not the images.

36 ¶ And Jacob was wroth, and chode with Laban; and Jacob answered, and said to Laban, What *is* my trespass? what *is* my sin, that thou hast so hotly pursued after me?

37 Whereas thou hast searched all my stuff, what hast thou found of all thy household stuff? set *it* here before my brethren, and thy brethren, that they may judge betwixt us both.

38 This twenty years *have I been* with thee; thy ewes and thy she-goats have not cast their young, and the rams of thy flock have I not eaten.

39 ⁱ That which was torn *of beasts*, I brought not unto thee; I bare the loss of it; of ^k my hand didst thou require it *whether* stolen by day, or stolen by night.

40 *Thus* I was; in the day the drought consumed me, and the frost by night: and my sleep departed from mine eyes.

^h Exod. 20 : 12; Lev. 19 : 32. ⁱ Exod. 22 : 10, &c. ^k Exod. 22 : 12.

ridge of the camel's back; and that under this, or among the shawls, cloaks and rugs which are used to make the saddle easy for women, the teraphim were concealed. The saddle of the camel is often surmounted with a large chair of wicker-work for women's comfort, and this is sometimes covered with a canopy for shelter from sun or rain. When the woman dismounts, this chair is often used in the tent, and looks like a basket or cradle, and may be large enough for two. There was room enough under this for the small teraphim, or *busts* of human form, and Rachel, cunning as ever, did not lack a device and pretence to give her success. Laban could not think that in such circumstances, she would sit upon his gods.

36. Jacob now takes greater boldness—grows indignant—and retorts upon Laban with sharpest crimination. He demands now the cause of this hot pursuit and the ground of

such severe accusations, which he could not at all prove. Little did Jacob dream of what Rachel had done and of how the search might have turned the tables against him to the triumph of Laban. He had better not have been quite so sure of the innocence of all his family. Alas! he thinks they could do no such wrong; but he should rather not so freely offer the wrong-doer's life as a forfeit.

37. Jacob challenges Laban now to produce any of his property that has been found in the search, and dares him to the judgment of their common relatives, and attendants.

38–40. Jacob recites the particulars of his faithful and laborious service for a score of years, and shows that he owes Laban nothing; and that but for the interposition of his Covenant God, he should have been sent away empty from Laban's house. According to this showing, Jacob had proved a pattern servant and

41 Thus have I been twenty years in thy house: I ¹served thee fourteen years for thy two daughters, and six years for thy cattle: and ^mthou hast changed my wages ten times.

42 ⁿExcept the God of my father, the God of Abraham, and ^othe Fear of Isaac had been with me, surely thou hadst sent me away now empty. ^pGod hath seen mine affliction, and the labor of my hands, and ^qrebuked *thee* yesternight.

43 ¶ And Laban answered, and said unto Jacob, *These* daughters *are* my daughters, and *these* children *are* my children, and *these* cattle *are* my cattle, and all that thou seest *is* mine; and what can I do this day unto these my daughters, or unto their children which they have borne?

44 Now therefore come thou, ^rlet us make a covenant, I and thou; ^sand let it be for a witness between me and thee.

45 And Jacob ^ttook a stone, and set it up *for* a pillar.

46 And Jacob said unto his brethren, Gather stones; and they took stones, and made an heap: and they did eat there upon the heap.

1 ch. 29: 27, 28. m ver. 7. n Ps. 124: 1, 2. o ver. 53; Isa. 8: 13. p ch. 29: 32; Exod. 3: 7. q 1 Chron. 12: 17; Jude 9. r ch. 26: 23. s Josh. 24: 27. t ch. 23: 18.

Laban a hard master. ¶ *Rams*, etc. Faithless shepherds would often feed themselves off of the rams. (Ezek. 34: 1-5.) ¶ *Torn of beasts*. Any such depredations upon the flock, he was always held responsible for, even when it occurred at night and without carelessness of his. *Day and night* he suffered—from the drought by day and the frost by night. This we found in the summer in the hill country of the Lebanon—that the cold nights were very trying, as well as the summer droughts. (Jer. 36: 30.) ¶ *Sleep*. He did not allow himself a fair measure of rest but gave his nights even to the care of Laban's flocks.

41. *Fourteen* years for the daughters—this was a severe exaction—and *six* for the cattle; during which time Laban had changed his wages so as better to suit himself *ten times*, or as often as he could.

42. The covenant God is referred to as having been Jacob's protector

from Laban's overreaching and craft. ¶ *The Fear of Isaac*. This is used as a name of God in His covenant relation. He who is the object of Isaac's fear, or reverential awe: like "the Hope of Israel." (Jer. 14: 8.) ¶ *Rebuked thee—judged thee*—by giving forewarning against violent language. *Keil* and *Delitzsch* read, *He judged it*; that is, the labor of my hands. "But the fact that God defended him from Laban's revenge did not prove him to be right." (See Prov. 20: 22.)

43-45. "These words of Jacob cut Laban to the heart with truth, so that he turned round, offered his hand, and proposed a covenant." Laban boastfully reminds Jacob that he could claim everything he had—that he owned him and all his. ¶ *And what can I do?* When it comes to the point, he has it not in his heart to do anything against his own flesh and blood. ¶ *A covenant*. He proposes to enter into a covenant

47 And Laban called it Jegar-sahadutha: but Jacob called it Galeed:

48 And Laban said, "This heap is a witness between me and thee this day. Therefore was the name of it called Galeed:

49 And ^v Mizpah; for he said, The LORD watch between me and thee, when we are absent one from another.

50 If thou shalt afflict my daughters, or if thou shalt take *other* wives besides my daughters; no man *is* with us; see, God *is* witness betwixt me and thee;

51 And Laban said to Jacob, Behold this heap, and behold *this* pillar, which I have cast betwixt me and thee:

52 This heap *be* witness, and *this* pillar *be* witness, that I will not pass over this heap to thee, and that thou shalt not pass over this heap and this pillar unto me for harm.

u Josh. 24: 27. v Judg. 11: 29; 1 Sam. 7: 5.

of reconciliation with Jacob. Heb. —*Cut a covenant.* To this proposition Jacob readily assented, and proceeded to erect the pillar. What a sudden change from the angry strife of words to this conciliation!

¶ *Witness.* (See vs. 52.)

46-48. *His brethren.* Laban and the relatives who accompanied him. (See vs. 54.) This heap of stones formed a table for the covenant meal. "This was meant to serve as a ratification of the covenant; for a thing is completed by becoming an outward reality, perceptible by the senses."—Kurtz. ¶ *Galeed. Hill of witness.* Alluding to the name of the mountain *Gilead*, and also expressing the idea of a *witnessing heap* or *heap of testimony*. The corresponding Syriac or Chaldee name is given to it by Laban. This name ("*Mountains of Gilead*," vs. 21-25,) is used in the widest sense and includes the northern half of the mountains, and not the southern half alone. It may be used here by the author as the name in his time, owing its origin to the monuments erected here by Jacob and Laban. (See Josh. 13: 26; Judg. 11: 29.)

49. *Mizpah*, that is, *watch*—watch-tower—observatory. (See Josh. 13:

26; Judg. 11: 29.) The pile of stones was to be not only a memorial, but a sort of *lookout*—when they should be absent from each other—keeping watch upon each of them for their fidelity. There are places bearing this name of Mizpah, or Mizpeh. One was a city of Benjamin, where Samuel judged Israel, (1 Sam. 7: 5-16,) now called Nebi-Samwil. Another was a town in the plain of Judah. (Josh. 15: 38.) Besides it was the name of a valley near Mt. Hermon. (Josh. 11: 3, 8.) This verse and the next seem parenthetical.

50. In the case mentioned of fidelity to his wives, the daughters of Laban, when they should be far removed out of his sight, this monument should be a watch-tower, representing God's omniscient watch of both parties—Jacob and Laban.

51, 52. Laban now further proclaims the use of this pillar of stones as a pledge, that neither of them should pass it with any hostile intent towards the other. ¶ *Cast—placed—erected.* Laban speaks of his erecting it, though Jacob seems to have undertaken it, yet along with Laban's company—"his brethren."

53 The God of Abraham, and the God of Nahor, the God of their father, ^y judge betwixt us. And Jacob ^z sware by ^a the Fear of his father Isaac.

54 Then Jacob offered sacrifice upon the mount, and called his brethren to eat bread : and they did eat bread, and tarried all night in the mount.

55 And early in the morning Laban rose up, and kissed his sons and his daughters, and ^b blessed them : and Laban departed, and ^c returned unto his place.

CHAPTER XXXII.

AND Jacob went on his way, and ^a the angels of God met him. 2 And when Jacob saw them, he said, This is God's ^b host : and he called the name of that place Mahanaim.

^y ch. 16 : 5. ^z ch. 21 : 23. ^a ver. 42. ^b ch. 28 : 1. ^c ch. 18 : 33, and 30 : 25. ^a Ps. 91 : 11 Heb. 1 : 14. ^b Josh. 5 : 14 ; Ps. 103 : 21, and 148 : 2 ; Luke 2 : 13.

53. This monument, which had probably been consecrated by sacrifices and a feast, was put by Laban under the protection of Jacob's God and Nahor's. Some suppose he mixed the true God with the heathen gods. But this is rather an acknowledgment that Terah "their father," and his descendants down to Laban, still confessed the true God, even in their idolatry. But Jacob sware by the *Fear of his father Isaac*—by the God whom Isaac feared. It was the hand of this Covenant God that so turned Laban's wrath into peace.

54. The covenant was accordingly ratified with sacrifice and a common meal. "They who have one God should have one heart. They who are agreed in religion should be agreed in everything else."

55. This genial parental conduct on Laban's part is a beautiful close of a scene so threatening at the first.

CHAPTER XXXII.

§ 55. JACOB'S WRESTLE WITH

THE COVENANT ANGEL. ISRAEL.

Jacob, thus delivered from Laban's scheming, had yet, on his return home, to meet his alienated brother Esau; and for this peril he required the Divine protection. As the angels appeared to him in a dream on his way to Laban, so now they appear to him more visibly on his return home. This sight is assuring, like that vision of the ladder, which he had seen twenty years before, traversed by the angel guards. Here they are encamped around him. (Ps. 34 : 8.) The promise made to him that he should be returned to his own land in peace was to be made good. (Ch. 28 : 15.) ¶ *Met him*. This is not in a dream, but at the morning hour and a real meeting. *Hengstenberg* regards it as a dream. Jacob had arrived now at the border of the holy land.

2. *God's host*—as against any host of men that might come against him. ¶ *Mahanaim*. This means a double host—the host of God joined to his own host, or a double encampment

3 And Jacob sent messengers before him to Esau his brother, ^c unto the land of Seir, ^d the country of Edom.

4 And he commanded them, saying, ^e Thus shall ye speak unto my lord Esau: Thy servant Jacob saith thus, I have sojourned with Laban, and stayed there until now:

5 And ^f I have oxen, and asses, flocks, and men-servants, and women-servants: and I have sent to tell my lord, that ^g I may find grace in thy sight.

6 ¶ And the messengers returned to Jacob, saying, We came to thy brother Esau, and also ^h he cometh to meet thee, and four hundred men with him.

7 Then Jacob was greatly afraid, and ⁱ distressed: and he divided the people that *was* with him, and the flocks, and herds, and the camels into two bands;

8 And said, If Esau come to the one company, and smite it, then the other company which is left shall escape.

^c ch. 33: 14: 16. ^d ch. 36: 6, 7, 8; Deut. 2: 5; Josh. 24: 4. ^e Prov. 15: 1. ^f ch. 30: 43. ^g ch. 33: 8, 15. ^h ch. 33: 1. ⁱ ch. 35: 3.

of forces. This is the name of a city, often mentioned afterwards, north of the Jabbok, probably the same as the modern *Mahneh*, on the boundary line between Gad and Manasseh, and one of the Levitical towns.

3. Jacob from this point sent messengers before him to conciliate Esau, in terms of great humility. ¶ *Seir*. This is Arabia Petrea, on the east and south of the Dead Sea, inhabited by the Horites, of which *Petra* was probably the capital. Esau had become connected with this region through his marriage with a daughter of Ishmael some twenty years before this time. He had probably felt that he was excluded from the inheritance of the promise—the future possession of Canaan. In ch. 36: 6, we find him in Canaan. But he seems to have had a double establishment, or was now on a warlike expedition.

4, 5. Jacob sends Esau this message of his wealth in order to show him that he did not come claiming his inheritance, that he even acknowledged him as *lord*, not even insisting on these temporal preroga-

tives of the birthright. Jacob may have felt some compunction at his ill-treatment of his brother, and he would at least disarm opposition. (See ch. 27: 29.) This concession would not in any way give up his claims to the spiritual headship and blessing. ¶ *That I may find grace in thy sight*. This was Jacob's avowed object in sending such a message.

6-8. Why Esau should come to meet him with four hundred men has been variously explained; but it seems most probable that this was a military band, with which he had attacked the Horites of that region, and that, on hearing of Jacob's advent, he took them with him, yet with no hostile intent. Jacob's sudden terror at the report of such a formidable troop was his punishment—a terror enhanced by all his self-reproaches of unfair dealing with his brother in obtaining Isaac's blessing. ¶ *Divided*. Jacob takes every precaution on the theory of Esau's hostile intent. This was his first step. The second step was prayer. Jacob was ready first to ply his devices, then to call

9 ¶^k And Jacob said, ¹ O God of my father Abraham, and God of my father Isaac, the LORD ^m which saidst unto me, Return unto thy country, and to thy kindred, and I will deal well with thee.

10 I am not worthy of the least of all the ⁿ mercies and of all the truth, which thou hast shewed unto thy servant: for with ^o my staff I passed over this Jordan, and now I am become two bands.

11 ^p Deliver me, I pray thee, from the hand of my brother, from the hand of Esau: for I fear him, lest he will come and smite me, and ^q the mother with the children.

12 And ^r thou saidst, I will surely do thee good, and make thy seed as the sand of the sea, which cannot be numbered for multitude.

13 ¶ And he lodged there that same night, and took of that which came to his hand ^s a present for Esau his brother;

k Ps. 50: 15. l ch. 28: 13. m ch. 31: 3, 13. n ch. 24: 27. o Job 8; 7. p Ps. 59: 1, 2. q Hos. 10: 14. r ch. 23: 13, 14, 15. s ch. 43: 11; Prov. 18: 16.

upon God. This division of a party into two bands was a prudential measure often resorted to in caravans, for the greater security of one part at least.

9-12. This prayer of Jacob is very touching; and here Jacob the schemer appears as Jacob the pious believer. (1.) He appeals to God as the Covenant God and Father. (2.) He pleads His gracious promises. (3.) He confesses his own deep unworthiness and God's great fidelity and free favor. (4.) He entreats for deliverance from the impending calamity. (5.) He closes with cleaving to God's word of promise. ¶ *Not worthy.* Heb.—*I am less than*—too little for—all the mercies. ¶ *With my staff.* Onk.—*By myself alone I crossed over this Jordan.* When he had crossed in his flight from Esau, he went as a poor, lonely fugitive, and, in a score of years, he had been blessed with all this increase. ¶ *Thou saidst.* God's word of truth and promise assures him, and he can press his plea. Skeptics claim to find in this manner of Jacob something improper in petitioning God.

But Kurtz remarks that this is only what true suppliants in all time have done—pleading the promises. (Ch. 28: 15.) Here it is the great covenant promise.

13-23. Jacob along with the prayer uses the fair expedients by which he hopes to conciliate Esau. *He took of that which came to his hand*—which came into his possession—in his service with Laban—five hundred and fifty head of cattle for a present to Esau; so that he is willing to give up about one half of the flocks he had acquired (yss. 7, 8) to appease Esau's supposed wrath. The milch camels were of great value, their milk being an article of common use. He would have a *space put between drove and drove*, so that the whole array might be more formidable, and might make a stronger impression of his liberality upon Esau. ¶ *Behind us.* To show that he did not purpose to escape. ¶ *Appease him.* Heb.—*Cover his face.* Gr.—*I will propitiate his countenance.* Chal.—*I will assuage his anger.* Esau would, several times, hear the same humble, conciliatory reply, and would so

14 Two hundred she-goats and twenty he-goats, two hundred ewes and twenty rams.

15 Thirty milch camels with their colts, forty kine and ten bulls, twenty she-asses and ten foals.

16 And he delivered *them* into the hand of his servants, every drove by themselves; and said unto his servants, Pass over before me, and put a space betwixt drove and drove.

17 And he commanded the foremost, saying, When Esau my brother meeteth thee, and asketh thee, saying, Whose *art* thou? and whither goest thou? and whose *are* these before thee?

18 Then thou shalt say, *They be* thy servant Jacob's: it *is* a present sent unto my lord Esau: and behold also he *is* behind us.

19 And so commanded he the second, and the third, and all that followed the drives, saying, On this manner shall ye speak unto Esau, when ye find him.

20 And say ye moreover, Behold, thy servant Jacob *is* behind us. For he said, I will 'appease him with the present that goeth before me, and afterward I will see his face; peradventure he will accept of me.

21 So went the present over before him; and himself lodged that night in the company.

22 And he rose up that night, and took his two wives, and his two women-servants, and his eleven sons, "and passed over the ford Jabbok.

23 And he took them, and sent them over the brook, and sent over that he had.

t Prov. 21: 14. u Deut. 3: 16.

much the more likely be moved to tenderness by the present itself. Jacob, with his keen sagacity, could understand how much better such conciliation would be for appeasing an angry brother than any severe terms or military prowess. (Prov. 21: 14.) *Lodged that night in the company—the camp*—after first sending his present in advance of him across the *brook Jabbok*. ¶ *Jabbok*—Jabbok, nearly the same word as is rendered *wrestled* in vs. 24, from which the brook may have derived its name. This brook is the *Zerka*, and empties into the Jordan on the east side, a distance below the Sea of Galilee, nearly half way to the Dead Sea, or

about forty miles. He sent forward his company, the present and all, across the brook, wishing, it would seem, to remain alone at prayer. He comes to a deeper reliance upon his covenant God. Such Divine manifestations have encouraged his faith. It is very seldom that our worldly affairs suffer from any loss of time in prayer. The brook at the ford is about ten yards wide. It would seem that he, at first, crossed the ford, to ascertain its safety, and then sent over his family and all that he had, and he himself remained on the northern bank, where the camp had been. The same night it is as in vs. 13.—God controls men's minds.

24 ¶ And Jacob was left alone; and there ^x wrestled a man with him, until the breaking of the day.

25 And when he saw that he prevailed not against him, he touched the hollow of his thigh: and ^y the hollow of Jacob's thigh was out of joint, as he wrestled with him.

26 And ^z he said, Let me go, for the day breaketh; and he said, ^a I will not let thee go, except thou bless me.

^x Hos. 12: 3, 4; Eph. 6: 12. ^y Matt. 26: 41; 2 Cor. 12: 7. ^z Luke 24: 28.
^a Hos. 12: 4.

24. Jacob was now left alone by his own choice, entrusting his all to God, and *there wrestled a man with him*. This was no dream nor vision, but reality. In Hos. 12: 4, 5, the *man* who wrestled with him is called *the angel*, and the Lord of hosts, and in vs. 30 of this chapter, Jacob calls him *God*. Who then is the God-man, the Angel of the Covenant, but the Eternal Son of God? This wrestling was a real hand to hand encounter and struggle, yet not necessarily in the form of common wrestling. The idea is of close, personal, corporeal conflict, in which the issue of physical strength was joined. This is plain from the crippling of the thigh which arrested the conflict and disabled him. God would in this form come against Jacob, as his enemy, instead of Esau whom he feared, would show him that it was He who had the controversy with him, and who must be propitiated.

25. When the Covenant Angel found his antagonist prevailing over him, Jacob was crippled in his hip-joint by the angel to humble his carnal nature, and to show the Divine nature of the mysterious wrestler. Henceforth he must go halting and feeling his weakness in the carnal fleshly department, where he had been strong and had boasted himself. And so soon as he discovered that the wrestler was God, the Covenant Angel, he struggled not any longer by muscle but by prayer, and so he

prevailed. "When God has a new thing, of a spiritual nature, to bring into the experience of man, he begins with the senses. He takes man on the ground on which he finds him, and leads him through the senses to the higher things of reason, conscience, and communion with God." —*Murphy*. This was the turning-point in Jacob's life. Henceforth he will put less dependence on the flesh, and fleshly means, and more upon God his deliverer. He prevailed indeed, but bore about in his body the marks of the struggle, and succeeded only by prayer and faith. The thigh is the pillar of a man's strength, and the hip-joint is the seat of physical force for him who would stand his ground as a wrestler.

26. Jacob still struggled and held fast, though disabled. This was the believer's importunity—the *bruising* of the persistent wrestler (Luke 18: 5), which prevails as it did over the unjust judge. But Jacob conquers at the moment his physical strength is crippled. "When I am weak then am I strong." (2 Cor. 12: 10.) The All-powerful cannot go without Jacob's leave. And Jacob will not let Him go except He bless him. What loving condescension of the covenant God, binding himself to the sinner! "I will not leave thee nor forsake thee." (Heb. 13: 5.) "Concerning the work of my hands command ye me." What power of faith to hold on, and not to let go

27 And he said unto him, What is thy name? And he said, Jacob.

28 And he said, ^bThy name shall be called no more Jacob, but Israel: for as a prince hast thou ^cpower with God, and ^dwith men, and hast prevailed.

29 And Jacob asked *him*, and said, Tell *me*, I pray thee, thy name: and he said, ^eWherefore, is it *that* thou dost ask after my name? And he blessed him there.

30 And Jacob called the name of the place Peniel: for ^fI have seen God face to face, and ^gmy life is preserved.

b ch. 35: 10; 2 Kings 17: 34. c Hos. 12: 3, 4. d ch. 25: 31, and 27: 33. e Judg. 13: 18. f ch. 16: 13; Exod. 24: 11, and 33: 20; Deut. 5: 24. g Judg. 6: 22, and 13: 22; Isa. 6: 5.

the Covenant Angel without a blessing!

27, 28. Jacob's name is now asked, not for information, but in order to call attention to his former self, as needing to be put away. "Put off, therefore, the old man." (Col. 3: 9.) The great change is indicated by a new name. He is no more *supplanter* (Jacob), but *prevailer with God*, (Israel.) ¶ *For as a prince*, etc. Jacob presents a resistless force when he comes to God, as the helpless, disabled suppliant, still cleaving to Him, though prostrate in the dust. This is the Divine energy in the weak creature, which prevails alike with God and with men. Now Jacob is father of the praying ones. "The sons of Jacob" are the children of firm faith and earnest prayer. Where this phrase occurs elsewhere, this is the significance of it. It designates the class of praying ones. (Mal. 3: 6.) OBSERVE.—How gracious in God to call His praying children *prevailers*—to give them thus beforehand the assurance of success, so as to encourage prayer and importunity. (Luke 11: 8; Isa. 45: 19.) Sept. reads, *Because thou hast had power with God thou shalt be mighty with men*. His prevalence with the angel (man) is referred to as the pledge of his prevalence with Esau. OBSERVE.—He who wins God to his side wins

man also, and gains the day, surely. The victory which Jacob had formerly gained over man in struggling for his birthright was now sanctioned and ratified by the victory he had obtained over God. The birthright which he had before obtained by unfair means was now granted to him as the gift of God.

29. When Jacob now inquires for the name of this mysterious wrestler, he gets not the name, but a blessing, which sufficiently reveals His identity. If the name of Jacob is *Prevailer*, the name of God is *Blessing*. "God is Light." "God is Love." (1 John 1. See Judges 13: 16–18.) The coveted *blessing* is obtained.

30. Jacob names the place of this memorable scene *Peniel*, meaning *the face of God*. He is first spoken of as a *man*. Hosea calls Him *the Angel*, (ch. 12: 4; See also vs. 5.) and here Jacob calls Him *God*. Jacob was fully satisfied that this was God. It is in His blessing us that God reveals Himself most clearly to us. (Luke 24: 30, 31; John 20: 16, 17; ch. 16: 13.) *To see God face to face and live* is the marvel of human experience. In this outward wrestling of man with man, God comes down to our senses and adapts Himself to our every day circumstances. (So in ch. 18: 1, 4, 8.) He shows also here, through the de-

31 And as he passed over Penuel, the sun rose upon him, and he halted upon his thigh.

32 Therefore the children of Israel eat not *of* the sinew which shrank, which is upon the hollow of the thigh, unto this day; because he touched the hollow of Jacob's thigh in the sinew that shrank.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

AND Jacob lifted up his eyes, and looked, and behold, ^a Esau came, and with him four hundred men. And he divided the children unto Leah, and unto Rachel, and unto the two handmaids.

2 And he put the handmaids and their children foremost, and Leah and her children after, and Rachel and Joseph hindermost.

3 And he passed over before them, and ^b bowed himself to the ground seven times, until he came near to his brother.

a ch. 32: 6. b ch. 18: 2, and 42: 6, and 43: 26.

partment of sense, that spiritual conflict in which God wrestles with our carnal nature and the Spirit strives with man, who is flesh, yet so disabling mere self and carnal strength by His grace as to put him upon prayer and faith for a real victory. Here also is a prophetic representation of God's conflict with the Israel, His covenant people, in which they contend against God and resist the Holy Ghost, until He at length breaks down their pride and boast by His mysterious touch, and they become a new people, called by a *new name*, as men of dependence and of prayer and of prevalence with God.

31, 32. *Penuel*—same as *Peniel*. With the sunrising after that night of conflict came the daybreak upon his soul. ¶ *And he halted upon his thigh*. His lameness was painfully apparent. God will have us remember our weakness daily and hourly in the whole journey of life. ¶ *The sinew that shrank*. This is the principal nerve or cord in the movement of the hip, which is most readily injured in wrestling.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

§ 56. JACOB CONCILIATES ESAU WITH PRESENTS. ARRIVES IN CANAAN.

The dreaded meeting is now at hand. Jacob calmly prepares for it, and makes ready for the worst. He arranges his company into three bands, forming a long train. He himself took the lead to meet Esau with utmost courtesy and conciliation; the presents having been sent before. Jacob has faith in God, but not in his brother.

1-3. He so arranges his family as that those most dear to him shall be most in the rear and the last to be exposed. He made sevenfold obeisance to his brother—in the form of Oriental prostration before a superior—bowing his head to the ground. Esau has the array of physical force. Jacob has only a weak band of women and children. Yet Jacob prevails. He acknowledged Esau as the elder brother, and remembered

4 ° And Esau ran to meet him, and embraced him : ^d and fell on his neck, and kissed him ; and they wept.

5 And he lifted up his eyes, and saw the women and the children, and said, Who *are* those with thee ? And he said, The children ° which God hath graciously given thy servant.

6 Then the handmaidens came near, they and their children, and they bowed themselves.

7 And Leah also with her children came near, and bowed themselves ; and after came Joseph near and Rachel, and they bowed themselves.

8 And he said, What *meanest* thou by ^f all this drove which I met ? And he said, *These are* ^g to find grace in the sight of my lord.

9 And Esau said, I have enough, my brother ; keep that thou hast unto thyself.

10 And Jacob said, Nay, I pray thee, if now I have found

c ch. 32: 28. d ch. 45: 14, 15. e ch. 48: 9; Ps. 127: 3; Isa. 8: 18. f ch. 32: 16.
g ch. 32: 5.

doubtless, his own unfair treatment of him.

4. Esau now shows a most remarkable tenderness. His brotherly feelings control all his alienation and passion. He makes the fondest advances. It is a scene like that of the prodigal son meeting his father. What a picture of love instead of hate—fraternity for enmity ! Who can so change the heart of man but God alone ? The lion is turned to be the lamb. God is better to Jacob than his fears, better than his deserts. “When a man’s ways please the Lord, He maketh even his enemies to be at peace with him.”

5. *Who.* Heb.—*Who these to thee*—pertaining to thee—along with thee ? The majority were the children whom God hath graciously granted to thy servant. Jacob thus faithfully acknowledges God’s hand in his affairs. He is his Covenant God.

6–9. The groups passed along with profound obeisance before Esau, in their order. ¶ *What.* Heb.—*What to thee is all this train ?* The

caravan or camp he had already met he cannot understand. What relation do they sustain to Jacob, or what is his object in such an array ? He states the object. It is *to find grace in the eyes of my lord*. They were to conciliate Esau’s favor. Esau declines the gift, on the ground that he has enough already and is in no need of such an addition to his possessions. ¶ *Keep.* Heb.—*Be that to thee which is to thee* (thine.) This was natural to a high-minded man ; though it was Oriental to profess indifference where the gift was really craved, or, at least, welcome enough.

10. Jacob urges the acceptance. To decline a gift is a token of enmity among the Orientals. ¶ *For.* Heb.—*Therefore I have seen thy face like seeing the face of God, and thou wast pleased with me*, (didst receive me favorably.) “God Himself had appeared to Jacob as his combatant instead of Esau. Therefore Jacob sees in Esau the appearance of God again. And in this case, as in that, the face, angry at first, changes into kindness to the believing man.”—

grace in thy sight, then receive my present at my hand : for therefore I ^h have seen thy face, as though I had seen the face of God, and thou wast pleased with me.

11 Take, I pray thee, ⁱ my blessing that is brought to thee ; because God had dealt graciously with me, and because I have enough : ^k and he urged him, and he took *it*.

12 And he said, Let us take our journey, and let us go, and I will go before thee.

13 And he said unto him, My lord knoweth that the children *are* tender, and the flocks and herds with young *are* with me, and if men should over-drive them one day, all the flock will die.

14 Let my lord, I pray thee, pass over before his servant : and I will lead on softly, according as the cattle that goeth before me and the children be able to endure ; until I come unto my lord ^l unto Seir.

15 And Esau said, Let me now leave with thee *some* of the

^h ch. 43 : 3 ; 2 Sam. 3 : 13, and 14 : 24, 28, 32 ; Matt. 18 : 10. ⁱ Judg. 1 : 15 ; 1 Sam. 25 : 27, and 30 : 26 ; 2 Kings 5 : 15. ^k 2 Kings 5 : 23. ^l ch. 32 : 3.

Baumgarten.—Already he had met Esau in the conflict with God, and had received encouragement of success in this meeting ; and now he recognizes the significance of that wrestling which ends in blessing. Seeing Esau now is like his seeing the face of God, and that which was already signified to him by the angel must not fail. Here again Jacob displays his triumphant faith. Others understand it, “In thy countenance I have been met with Divine (heavenly) friendliness. He must have discerned the work of God in the unexpected change in his brother’s disposition towards him, and in his brother’s friendliness a reflection of the Divine.”—*Keil and Delitzsch.*

11. *My blessing.* That is, my gratitude. So a *gift* is called a *blessing* in 1 Sam. 25 : 27 ; 30 : 26 ; 2 Kings 5 : 15. It is the present which expresses his blessing. ¶ *I have enough.* Heb.—“*I have all*, as heir of the promises.” “All are yours.” Esau may not have fully understood Jacob’s larger meaning. Esau had said, literally, *I have much*. Jacob says,

“*I have all.*” The worldling may indeed have much ; but he lacks one thing which is the vital thing—which is everything—as the soul to the body, as the eye to the needle, as the blade to the knife. The Christian has all things, the world, life, death, things present, things to come ! Upon this urgency of Jacob, Esau yielded and took the gift.

12–15. Esau now proposes to escort Jacob through the country with his armed band. Jacob declines for reasons which are plain. But such an alliance might have given occasion for the old animosity to break out. Close associations of Christian men with the world and worldlings are commonly full of mischief. ¶ *The flocks and herds that are milking are upon me* (as a charge and a care) *and if one should over-drive them a single day all the flock would die.* The caravan could not attempt to keep up with Esau’s horsemen, without greatest peril of life. ¶ *Pass over before.* Jacob proposes that Esau go on in advance. Heb.—*I will lead on at my slow gait, at the*

folk that *are* with me: And he said, What needeth it? ^m Let me find grace in the sight of my lord.

16 ¶ So Esau returned that day on his way unto Seir.

17 And Jacob journeyed to ⁿ Succoth, and built him an house, and made booths for his cattle: therefore the name of the place is called Succoth.

18 ¶ And he came to ^o Shalem, a city of ^p Shechem, which *is* in the land of Canaan, when he came from Padan-aram; and pitched his tent before the city.

19 And ^a he bought a parcel of a field, where he had spread his tent, at the hand of the children of Hamor, Shechem's father, for an hundred pieces of money.

20 And he erected there an altar, and ^r called it El-Elohe-Israel.

^m ch. 34: 11, and 47: 25; Ruth 2: 13. ⁿ Josh. 13: 27. ^o John 3: 23. ^p Josh. 24: 1; Judg. 9: 1. ^q Josh. 24: 32; John 4: 5. ^r ch. 35: 7.

pace of the possessions (cattle) and at the pace of the children," at such gait as they could comfortably travel.

¶ *Until.* He proposes to come up to him at length at Mt. Seir, where Esau was at that time encamped and sojourning. This meeting was to be in the future. His direct course was to Canaan and Hebron, the home of Isaac his father. But he would pay an early visit to Esau. We suppose he did, but we have no account of their meeting afterwards, until at their father's funeral. (Ch. 35: 29.)

15. Esau further proposes to leave some of his men for an escort and aid. But Jacob declines this favor also, trusting most in the guardian power and grace of God. *Kalisch* reads, "Wherefore do I thus find grace in the sight of my lord?" But the accents are against this rendering. ¶ *My lord.* This is the language of Oriental courtesy, but implies no relinquishment of his birth-right claim. More than any favor Esau could show him would be his brotherly conciliation.

16, 17. Here the brothers separated,—the one taking the way to Seir, the other the way to Succoth. ¶ *Built him an house.* This intimates a plan for sojourn. *Succoth,*

Booths—so called from the *booths* erected by Jacob there. "These *booths* for the flocks were probably not huts of branches and shrubs, but hurdles or folds made of twigs woven together."—*Keil and Delitzsch.* This place lay east of the Jordan and south of the Jabbok. Jacob may have remained here some years. He could visit his father from this point as well as from Shechem, and he will not be expected to subordinate himself to Isaac's household after having now attained a position of patriarchal independence. The break in the text here indicates a pause in the history, and some time, six or eight years, must have elapsed, before the painful transaction recorded in the next chapter, as Dinah was now only about six years of age. OBSERVE.—In Ps. 60: 6, reference is had to this formal settlement of Jacob on both sides of the Jordan, as a pledge of the occupancy of the whole land.

18–20. Jacob at length took up his march again and crossed the Jordan, at one of the fords *and came to Shalem.* This is more properly rendered, *came in safety to a city of Shechem* alluding to ch. 28: 21. What Jacob besought in his vow at Bethel,

CHAPTER XXXIV.

AND ^a Dinah, the daughter of Leah, which she bare unto Jacob, ^b went out to see the daughters of the land.

a ch. 30: 21. b Tit. 2: 5.

he now received, a safe return "*in peace*" to his own land. He bought the land—"a *parcel of the field*" on which his encampment had been located—for a *hundred pieces of money*. This coin, called *Kesitah*, (lamb,) was perhaps of the value of a lamb, as *Gesenius* suggests. Ancient coins were often stamped with the figure of an animal, perhaps originally with this reference to its value. This Shechem, Sychem, Sychar, is now called *Nablous*, and is the central point of the Holy Land, where Abraham first encamped when coming in from Mesopotamia, and builded first an altar. (Ch. 12: 6.) "A parcel of a field which Jacob gave to his son Joseph" is mentioned John 4: 6, where was Jacob's well,—this very spot. Jacob was the first patriarch who became a purchaser of a home in Canaan. "This purchase showed that Jacob, in reliance upon the promise of God, regarded Canaan as his own home and the home of his seed."—*Keil and Delitzsch*. We were pointed to a Mahometan wely, called the sepulchre of Joseph, in the valley, "on the border of his inheritance which was Mt. Ephraim." (Josh. 24: 32.) It was at the south-eastern opening of the valley of Shechem, not far from the town, and at the foot of the ridge of Gerizim, just north of the well of Jacob. The people proposed to show us the tomb, but were so exacting in their demands and suspicious in their conduct that we declined.

20. *An altar*. Following the example of Abraham, (ch. 12: 7.) Called it *El-Elohe Israel*. He here

uses his new name, "*Israel*," in close association with the name of God, and calls *God*, (the mighty,) *the God of Israel*—his Covenant God. He would thus honor Him by a memorial altar and would worship Him as such. This is in keeping with his vow, (ch. 28: 21.) God had proved Himself the Mighty One and his God, in giving him safe escort, and almighty protection and deliverance, so that he returned to his father's house in peace. Accordingly as he vowed, so, in fulfilment of his vow, he takes the Lord to be *his God*, and devotes a tenth of his goods to His worship. (See ch. 28: 20-22.)

CHAPTER XXXIV.

§ 57. JACOB AND HAMOR THE HITE.

Jacob suffers now one of the most dreadful calamities that can befall a household—the disgrace and ruin of his daughter. As he had begun his career in a course of deceit and dependence on carnal expedients to accomplish even the best ends, he was met by deceit in others and punished in the same kind. He was then brought to a consciousness of guilt, and humbled before God, as his Covenant God, protecting and delivering him from his enemy, whom he had wrongly treated. And now he is exhibited as further suffering shame in his family. "As a son, a servant, a husband, a father, in youth, manhood, and old age, Jacob is a sufferer."—*Bush*.

1-5. *Dinah*. This daughter of

2 And when Shechem the son of Hamor the Hivite, prince of the country, ^csaw her, he ^dtook her, and lay with her, and defiled her.

3 And his soul clave unto Dinah the daughter of Jacob, and he loved the damsel, and spake kindly unto the damsel.

4 And Shechem ^espake unto his father Hamor, saying, Get me this damsel to wife.

5 And Jacob heard that he had defiled Dinah his daughter: now his sons were with his cattle in the field: and Jacob ^fheld his peace until they were come.

6 ¶ And Hamor the father of Shechem went out unto Jacob to commune with him.

7 And the sons of Jacob came out of the field when they heard

c ch. 6: 2; Judg. 14: 1. d ch. 20: 2. e Judg. 14: 2. f 1 Sam. 10: 27; 2 Sam. 13: 22.

Leah was about six years old when they left Padan-aram, and was now probably thirteen, or it may be even sixteen, which accounts for the time passed at Succoth and Shechem. At this age womanhood is attained among the Orientals. The Jewish Rabbis of a later time fix the marriageable age of a female at twelve years and a day. "If we suppose Dinah to have been born in the same year with Joseph, who was in his seventeenth year at the time of his being sold as a bond-slave, (ch. 37: 2,) the events of this chapter must have occurred between her twelfth and sixteenth year."—*Murphy*. ¶ *Went out to see*. Gr.—*To know*—make acquaintance of. Heb.—*To look at*; but out of a vain curiosity and careless intimacy; not regarding the duty of separation from idolatrous people and their manners and habits. It is not implied that this was the only instance of her going out, or that it was the first instance. She had probably become accustomed so to do, until she had contracted evil associations and tastes. *Josephus* has it that "she went to see the finery of the women of the country on occasion of a feast." "Evil communications corrupt good manners." ¶ *Shechem*. This was a

family name. This man was *prince of the country*, and had great power and great facility in enticing one so inexperienced; and in his pride he hesitated not at this awful sin against God and man. ¶ Heb.—*He loved the girl and spake to her heart*—spake comfortingly to her, promising fidelity and marriage; which nevertheless could not atone for the sin and shame. It is more common to find men hating those whom they have grievously wronged and ruined. It was customary for parents to negotiate marriages for their children, and if a son had a preference, he would appeal to his father to procure for him the object of his choice. ¶ *Jacob heard*. The painful news came to the father, and he was overwhelmed, doubtless, with grief, and held his peace—stunned by the blow to his family—until his sons should return from tending the cattle in the field. (See Exod. 14: 14; 2 Sam. 19: 11.)

6–7. The father of the seducer complies with his son's request and goes out to negotiate with Jacob for the daughter in marriage. This was according to the Oriental custom, that the fathers should arrange for marrying their children. But the

it: and the men were grieved, and they ^s were very wroth, because he ^h had wrought folly in Israel, in lying with Jacob's daughter; ⁱ which thing ought not to be done.

8 And Hamor communed with them, saying, The soul of my son Shechem longeth for your daughter: I pray you give her him to wife.

9 And make ye marriages with us, *and* give your daughters unto us, and take our daughters unto you.

10 And ye shall dwell with us: and ^k the land shall be before you; dwell and ^l trade ye therein, and ^m get you possessions therein.

11 And Shechem said unto her father, and unto her brethren, Let me find grace in your eyes, and what ye shall say unto me, I will give.

12 Ask me never so much ⁿ dowry and gift, and I will give according as ye shall say unto me: but give me the damsel to wife.

g ch. 49: 7; 2 Sam. 13: 21. h Josh. 7: 15; Judg. 20: 6. i Deut. 23: 17; 2 Sam. 13: 12. k ch. 13: 9, and 20: 15. l ch. 42: 34. m ch. 47: 27. n Exod. 22: 16, 17; Deut. 22: 29; 1 Sam. 18: 25.

sons, if they were their own brothers, had also a voice in regard to the marrying of their sisters. The brothers *were grieved*—vexed (enraged) when they heard the news, and they left the field. Heb.—*And it was kindled to them exceedingly*—they were exceedingly inflamed. ¶ *Wrought folly*—*wrought iniquity*. This was a standing phrase from this time forth for crimes against the honor and vocation of Israel as the covenant people—especially for gross sins of the flesh. (Deut. 22: 21; Judg. 20: 10; 2 Sam 13: 2.) “Fool” and “folly” are terms used of impiety and iniquity. (See *Proverbs*.) ¶ *Israel*. The term is here first used to designate the covenant people as the descendants of Jacob. His seed were the chosen of God, and therefore the crime was more shocking as committed against the church. ¶ *Ought not*. Heb.—*And so it shall not be done*. The sons of Jacob now first appear as a religious class, conscious of the contrast between themselves and Canaan, and drawing the line

between their conduct and that of Ishmael and Esau, in regard to alliances with strangers.

8–10. Hamor now opened his business to the brothers, as having a voice in the matter of their sister's marriage to his son. (Ch. 24: 50.) The most attractive offers are made for an alliance of their tribes on condition of this marriage—inter-marriage, the freedom of the soil, for dwelling and trading and settling among them, holding property. ¶ *Get you possessions in it*—settle down securely.

11, 12. The offending Shechem adds also an inducement—that he will give whatever they shall say as a *dowry and gift*; that is, as a *bridal present*—dowry to her, and to her family *gifts*, (ch. 24: 53,) not as a price for the bride. Thus it is plain that the father and son are both anxious to give the injured daughter the most honorable position, and to make all amends possible for the injury and shame brought upon the family.

13 And the sons of Jacob answered Shechem and Hamor his father °deceitfully, and said, Because he had defiled Dinah their sister:

14 And they said unto them, We cannot do this thing, to give our sister to one that is uncircumcised: for ^pthat *were* a reproach unto us:

15 But in this will we consent unto you: If ye will be as we *be*, that every male of you be circumcised;

16 Then will we give our daughters unto you, and we will take your daughters to us, and we will dwell with you, and we will become one people.

17 But if ye will not hearken unto us, to be circumcised, then will we take our daughter, and we will be gone.

18 And their words pleased Hamor, and Shechem, Hamor's son.

19 And the young man deferred not to do the thing, because he had delight in Jacob's daughter: and he *was* ^qmore honorable than all the house of his father.

20 ¶ And Hamor and Shechem his son came unto the gate of their city, and communed with the men of their city, saying,

o 2 Sam. 13: 24, etc. p Josh. 5: 9. q 1 Chron. 4: 9.

13-17. *The sons, etc.* In Oriental countries it is held that the brothers are more deeply disgraced by the seduction of their sister than the husband is by the fall of his wife; for the wife can be divorced, but not the sister. (2 Sam. 13: 28.) ¶ *Answered deceitfully.* They had recourse to a shameful stratagem, and under the pretence of sealing a compact with them by the sacred ordinance of circumcision, they profanely abused the sacrament to execute their revenge. ¶ *Because.* They justified themselves in this by the gross outrage of Shechem. It was right enough that they should decline the proposals of intermarriage with heathen. Their demand is fair, that the tribe shall first associate themselves religiously with the covenant people by the sacrament of circumcision. On this sole condition they will give their consent to the marriage.

18, 19. The proposal was satisfac-

tory to Hamor and Shechem. Heb. —*Their words were good in the eyes of, etc.* And the latter did not hesitate nor delay to submit to the ordinance, because of his love for Dinah. ¶ *And he was honored before all his father's house.* This high character is given to him, perhaps referring only to his social standing. But he was a heathen, and the covenant family of Jacob must have known that no mere outward ceremonial act could incorporate them with the chosen family so as to make them sharers in the future glory of Israel. Nor could the sacrament itself make this wrong-doer a true Israelite. He took a mere worldly view of the matter, and was willing to take the sacrament for gain.

20-23. The father and son now submit the proposal to the people of their tribe—the Hivites—at the gate of the city, where the people assembled commonly for public business. These two, who had now an interest

21 These men *are* peaceable with us, therefore let them dwell in the land, and trade therein: for the land, behold, *it is* large enough for them: let us take their daughters to us for wives, and let us give them our daughters.

22 Only herein will the men consent unto us for to dwell with us, to be one people, if every male among us be circumcised as they *are* circumcised.

23 *Shall* not their cattle, and their substance, and every beast of theirs *be* ours? only let us consent unto them, and they will dwell with us.

24 And unto Hamor, and unto Shechem his son, hearkened all that ^rwent out of the gate of his city: and every male was circumcised, all that went out of the gate of his city.

25 ¶ And it came to pass on the third day, when they were sore, that two of the sons of Jacob, ^sSimeon and Levi, Dinah's brethren, took each man his sword, and came upon the city boldly, and slew all the males.

26 And they slew Hamor and Shechem his son with the edge of the sword, and took Dinah out of Shechem's house, and went out.

27 The sons of Jacob came upon the slain, and spoiled the city; because they had defiled their sister.

r ch. 23: 10. s ch. 49: 5, 6, 7.

in the question, plead for an acceptance of the proposal. They plead, (1.) The peaceableness of the family of Jacob. (2.) The ample room for their settlement and the expediency of an alliance with them. They then state the sole condition upon which this object can be gained; and they urge their plea by an artful reference to the great advantage in increasing the common wealth of the tribe by the annexation of this people. ¶ *Be ours.* It would be so much increase to the stock and wealth of the tribe to take in this powerful and rich family.

24. The agreement was executed, and Dinah was taken home to Shechem's house, (vs. 26.) The consent of the people could scarcely have been had on the sole ground of the secular advantage. But they doubtless knew that this sacred rite was

customary among other nations, Egyptians and Colchians, as an act of religious or priestly consecration. This rite passed from nation to nation in various ways.

25. The plot was deeply laid. When the Shechemites were suffering most from the wound, the two sons of Jacob, Simeon and Levi, (with their tribe, of course,) leading their dependents, attacked the city and slew all the males, including the father and his wicked son, and they took their sister from his house. Simeon and Levi were sons of Leah and therefore were own brothers of Dinah, and held themselves charged to avenge her disgrace and ruin. They would be six and seven years older than she was; that is, in their twenty-second and third years, supposing her to have been sixteen.

27-29. All the sons of Jacob seem

28 They took their sheep, and their oxen, and their asses, and that which *was* in the city, and that which *was* in the field.

29 And all their wealth, and all their little ones, and their wives took they captive, and spoiled even all that *was* in the house.

30 And Jacob said to Simeon and Levi, ^tYe have ^utroubled me, ^xto make me to stink among the inhabitants of the land, among the Canaanites and the Perizzites: ^yand I *being* few in number, they shall gather themselves together against me, and slay me, and I shall be destroyed, I and my house.

31 And they said, Should he deal with our sister as with an harlot?

^t ch. 49 : 6. ^u Josh. 7 : 25. ^x Exod. 5 : 21; 1 Sam. 13 : 4. ^y Deut. 4 : 27; Ps. 105 : 12.

to have joined in this revengeful proceeding, despoiling the city, seizing the cattle and goods, taking the children and wives captives, after destroying the males. This was a piece of shocking cruelty and treachery.

30. Jacob was overwhelmed now with a new trouble. It was shocking that his family had been disgraced by the sin and shame of his daughter. Now the sin and cruelty of his sons is a new source of grief. But he does not now make mention of their crime against God, but only of the immediate consequences to him and his house from the wrath of the neighboring tribes. This atrocious and bloody deed had made him odious and infamous in the eyes of these Canaanites, (ch. 13 : 7,) and this peril he mentions to arouse the compunction of his sons. They might care for this common danger, if not for their sin. As he and his house were few in number as compared with these surrounding tribes, they might all of them expect to be swept away in retaliation, as most offensive to them. Heb.—*I, men of*

number—easily numbered, he and his.

31. The sons make no defence at this reproof of their father, except to set forth how infamous was the deed of Shechem in dealing with their *sister as with a harlot!* It was a violation of the sacred laws of hospitality, and it was a burning disgrace to Israel, the covenant people. This is the language of passion, gloating itself in revenge and taking no blame, but justifying outrage by outrage. Should the law be taken thus into their own hands? Should the innocent be made to suffer for the guilty in such an indiscriminate slaughter? Should the sacred rite of circumcision—a sacramental seal of God's covenant—be abused and profaned to serve the ends of treachery? Jacob on his death-bed pronounces severe sentence upon this bloody deed and upon Simeon and Levi as leaders in it—excluding them from the rights of primogeniture, (ch. 49 : 5-7.) The evil consequences of their conduct are noticed here to show how, by God's good providence, the chosen family are protected. (Ch. 35 : 5.)

CHAPTER XXXV.

AND God said unto ^a Jacob, Arise, go up to Beth-el, and dwell there: and make there an altar unto God, ^b that appeared unto thee ^c when thou fleddest from the face of Esau thy brother.

2 Then Jacob said unto his ^d household, and to all that *were* with him, Put away ^e the strange gods that *are* among you, and be ^f clean and change your garments:

3 And let us arise, and go up to Beth-el; and I will make there an altar unto God ^g who answered me in the day of my distress, ^h and was with me in the way which I went.

a ch. 28: 19. b ch. 28: 13. c ch. 27: 43. d ch. 18: 19; Josh. 24: 15. e ch. 31: 19, 34; Josh. 24: 2, 23. f Exod. 19: 10. g ch. 32: 7, 24; Ps. 107: 6. h ch. 28: 20, and 31: 3, 42.

CHAPTER XXXV.

§ 58. COVENANT PROMISE RE-
NEWED TO JACOB AT BETHEL.
JACOB AT MAMRE. ISAAC'S
DEATH.

Jacob journeys from Shechem to Bethel, where he has a vision and erects a pillar, and thence he travels to Hebron, to visit his father Isaac, whose death is here recorded at the age of one hundred and eighty years.

1. Jacob was now about a hundred and six years old, and it was about ten years since he left Padan-aram. Six or eight years he had tarried at Shechem—and yet he had not performed the vow which he made at Bethel, when fleeing from Esau. (Ch. 28: 20, etc.) ¶ *To God.* The name here is *El*, referring to *Beth-El*. It was plain that he could not stay longer at Shechem in safety. God, at this juncture, appears to him and directs him to go to Bethel, and *to dwell there* long enough to accomplish there what he had vowed some thirty years before. God reminds him of the circumstances of that appearing to him as a wrestler, and of the promise made to him, which had been

so faithfully fulfilled, and now He would have him faithful in return. Men are apt to forget promises made to God in their day of trouble.

2. Jacob feels the solemnity of this duty, and the necessity of putting away from his house everything inconsistent with the sincere and hearty worship of God. ¶ *The strange gods.* These were such as the *teraphim* that Rachel had hidden, (ch. 31: 19,) and possibly other images of idolatry, perhaps from the Shechemites, which had been improperly tolerated and which may have induced the neglect, on Jacob's part, to perform his vow. This was regarded in the light of a religious covenant, and it was accompanied by rites of purification and change of garments, which though not commanded here, were nevertheless grounded on the first principles of religious service, such as are expressed in baptism. (Exod. 19: 15; Josh. 24: 23; Isa. 52: 11.) God will not let His people go unadmonished of their duty.

3. Jacob summons his household to respond to God's call; and he recognizes the Divine claim and his religious obligation. He had become so comfortably settled as to be careless about this vow, until charged with it solemnly by God Himself.

4 And they gave unto Jacob all the strange gods which *were* in their hand, and *all their*ⁱ ear-rings which *were* in their ears; and Jacob hid them under^k the oak which *was* by Shechem.

5 And they journeyed: and^l the terror of God was upon the cities that *were* round about them, and they did not pursue after the sons of Jacob.

6 ¶ So Jacob came to^m Luz, which *is* in the land of Canaan (that *is* Beth-el), he and all the people that *were* with him.

7 And heⁿ built there an altar, and called the place El-beth-el; because^o there God appeared unto him, when he fled from the face of his brother.

8 But^p Deborah, Rebekah's nurse, died, and she was buried

i Hos. 2: 13. k Josh. 24: 26; Judg. 9: 6. l Exod. 15: 16, and 23: 27, and 34: 24; Deut. 11: 25; Josh. 2: 9, and 5: 1; 1 Sam. 14: 15; 2 Chron. 14: 14. m ch. 28: 19, 22. n Eccles. 5: 4. o ch. 28: 13. p ch. 24: 50.

“Woe to them that are at ease in Zion.” True reformation as an evidence of repentance is a preparatory to public consecration.

4. The household promptly consented to part with their idols and ornaments of idolatry. The ear-rings were probably worn as amulets and charms, and may have been taken from the idols. *He hid them*—buried them under the terebinth or oak at Shechem. (See Josh. 24: 26.) The ear-rings were connected then, as they are now, with incantations and enchantments, and were idolatrous in their use. (Hos. 2: 13.) This oak was probably that under which Abraham pitched his tent, (ch. 12: 6,) and was regarded as a sacred place in Joshua's time when he brought the people there to a renewal of their covenant, with probable reference to this event. (See, also, Deut. 7: 25.) This decided act of consecration now performed by Jacob and his house, was attended with the Divine blessing for their protection. *Kalisch* thinks that this property here given up was his promised tithe.

5. *The terror of God.* When they left Shechem the people of the surrounding cities were struck with a supernatural terror, and were thus kept from pursuing them as they

would naturally have done, to avenge their slaughter of the Shechemites. He seems to have retained his property there, (ch. 37: 12; 48: 22,) and Jacob's well is still to be seen there. ¶ *Luz.* Though Jacob had called the spot of his vision and vow by the name of Bethel, yet the town was known as “*Luz*,” and it was only gradually that the name “*Bethel*” came into use. ¶ *In the land of Canaan.* This is added to remind us of his being in the land of promise. (Ch. 33: 18.) “*Luz*” means “*almond tree*.”

7. *El-beth-el.* The Sept., Syr., Vulg. and Arab. omit “*El*.” *God of Bethel*, or *God of the house of God*. It was called “*Bethel*” before, and commonly after this. But Jacob adds to it here the name of God, repeated as indicating a repeated manifestation. (Ch. 32: 30.) Jacob thus begins to fulfil the vow he had made to erect a house of God here, and pay a tenth of his receipts. (Ch. 28: 20-22).

8. *But Deborah.* This nurse of Rebekah had accompanied her from Mesopotamia to Canaan. (Ch. 24: 59.) How Deborah came from the family of Isaac does not appear, but possibly on Jacob's return from Laban. A connection was doubt-

beneath Beth-el, under an oak: and the name of it was called Al-lon-bachuth.

9 And ^a God appeared unto Jacob again when he came out of Padan-aram; and blessed him.

10 And God said unto him, Thy name is Jacob: ^r thy name shall not be called any more Jacob, ^s but Israel shall be thy name; and he called his name Israel.

11 And God said unto him, ^t I *am* God Almighty: be fruitful and multiply: ^u a nation and a company of nations shall be of thee, and kings shall come out of thy loins.

12 And the land ^v which I gave Abraham and Isaac, to thee I will give it, and to thy seed after thee will I give the land.

^q Hos. 12: 4. ^r ch. 17: 5. ^s ch. 32: 28. ^t ch. 17: 1, 48: 3, 4; Exod. 6: 3. ^u ch. 17: 5, 6, 16, and 28: 3, and 48: 4. ^v ch. 12: 7, and 13: 15, and 26: 3, 4, and 28: 13.

less kept up between Isaac and Jacob during the long separation. After Rebekah's death she had probably joined the family of the favorite son. She was now about a hundred and eighty years old. And such an old nurse in the household was held in highest veneration. She was buried with every mark of respect, and the oak under which she was laid was called "*the oak of weeping*," and thus her memory was preserved to after generations. (See Judg. 2: 1; 4: 5; 1 Sam. 10: 3.) This was a tender link, connecting the wandering son with the beloved and doting mother who had now departed, and whom he would not see again on earth.

9-12. *Appeared again.* Now, after Jacob's return from Padan-aram God appeared to him as He had done on his journey thither, and He renewed to him the covenant blessing, and repeated to him his covenant name, *Israel*. *Bethel* and *Israel* have thus an appropriate and important connection. "Jacob there solemnly acknowledged God as the God of Beth-el, and to this the solemn appointment of Jacob as Israel corresponded."—*Heng*. The name had first been announced, (ch. 32: 28,) and it

had been recognized meanwhile, (ch. 33: 20: ch. 34: 7.)

11, 12. God now announces Himself as *God Almighty*, as in ch. 17: 1, and on the basis of his omnipotence to perform His word. He bids Jacob to be fruitful, etc., and thus pronounces on him the covenant blessing of Abraham. He not only repeated the material promises made to himself and to his ancestors but He confirmed chiefly the spiritual dominion which his seed should exercise. A numerous and powerful posterity, and the land of promise should be the heritage of his family. (See Josh. 5: 9.) "Abraham and Isaac had each only one son of promise. Now the time of increase is come." He had already eleven sons and one daughter, and the number of sons was to be increased to twelve; and from this time the increase is rapid. Twenty-six years after this he goes down to Egypt with seventy souls besides the wives of his married descendants, and two hundred and fifteen years after that he leaves Egypt with one million and eight hundred thousand, which was *a nation and a congregation of nations*, while "*kings*" were to come afterwards.

13 And God ^x went up from him, in the place where he talked with him.

14 And Jacob ^y set up a pillar in the place where he talked with him, *even* a pillar of stone: and he poured a drink-offering thereon, and he poured oil thereon.

15 And Jacob called the name of the place where God spake with him, ^z Beth-el.

16 ¶ And they journeyed from Beth-el; and there was but a little way to come to Ephrath: and Rachel travailed, and she had hard labor.

17 And it came to pass when she was in hard labor that the midwife said unto her, Fear not; ^a thou shalt have this son also.

x ch. 17 : 22. y ch. 28 : 18. z ch. 28 : 19. a ch. 30 : 24; 1 Sam. 4 : 20.

13. *God went up*—as from Abraham, (ch. 17 : 22.) He had appeared visibly now, and not in a dream as before, (ch. 28.) Jacob alludes to this second appearing towards the close of his life, (ch. 48 : 3, 4,) and Hosea represents it as the result of his wrestling with God. (Hos. 12 : 4.) This is quite different from the former manifestation, and is confirmatory of that.

14. Jacob erects a pillar of memorial, and here for the first time we read of a libation, or drink-offering, besides the anointing with oil, as before, (ch. 28 : 18.) This was in further fulfilment of the vow then made to make the spot *God's house*. He calls the place *Bethel*, keeping in view for his posterity this leading idea of God's worship, as their Covenant God.

16-19. As they came near to *Ephrath* or *Bethlehem*, (the latter being the town, and the former—meaning *fruitful*—the district or suburb as some suppose,) Rachel died. ¶ *A little way*. Heb.—*A space of ground*. How suddenly is Jacob's adversity come upon him! (See ch. 48 : 7, notes.) ¶ *Fear not; for this also is a son to thee*. (See ch. 30 : 24,—when she expressed this idea at Joseph's birth.) ¶ *When her soul was departing*. A phrase which implies that

the soul only changes place at death, and is not annihilated—and this is the clear teaching of all the Scripture. ¶ *Benoni, son of my pain*, was the name which the dying mother gave to the boy. *Benjamin* was the name the father gave him, meaning *son of right hand, or son of happiness*, expressing his comfort and consolation at the birth of the son, though the mother of his love must die. The right hand is the place of honor and power, and this was Benjamin's place as the favorite, whose birth made up the number of the covenant sons to *twelve*, the number of completion. ¶ *The pillar, monument of Rachel's grave*, was standing at the day when this history was penned by Moses. It was well known in Samuel's time, (1 Sam. 10 : 2.) And the white dome (Mohammedan Wely) which we visited, and which ancient tradition has marked as the spot, almost without dispute, stands on a gentle knoll, about a mile north from Bethlehem, on the right of the road as you go towards Hebron. ¶ *Unto this day*. This phrase occurs often in Genesis, but not elsewhere in the Pentateuch, excepting once in Deuteronomy. It is used of relative duration, and quite as we should expect, on the supposition of the Mosaic authorship, (see *Heng*.) The

18 And it came to pass as her soul was in departing, (for she died,) that she called his name Ben-oni: but his father called him Benjamin.

19 And ^b Rachel died, and was buried in the way to ^c Ephrath, which is Beth-lehem.

20 And Jacob set a pillar upon her grave: that is the pillar of Rachel's grave ^d unto this day.

21 ¶ And Israel journeyed, and spread his tent beyond ^e the tower of Edar.

22 And it came to pass, when Israel dwelt in that land, that Reuben went and ^f lay with Bilhah his father's concubine: and Israel heard it. Now the sons of Jacob were twelve:

23 The sons of Leah; ^g Reuben, Jacob's first-born, and Simeon, and Levi, and Judah, and Issachar, and Zebulun:

24 The sons of Rachel; Joseph, and Benjamin:

25 And the sons of Bilhah, Rachel's handmaid; Dan, and Naphtali:

26 And the sons of Zilpah, Leah's handmaid; Gad, and Asher. These are the sons of Jacob, which were born to him in Padan-aram.

27 ¶ And Jacob came unto Isaac his father unto ^h Mamre, unto the ⁱ city of Arba (which is Hebron) where Abraham and Isaac sojourned.

28 And the days of Isaac were an hundred and fourscore years.

29 And Isaac gave up the ghost and died, and ^k was gathered unto his people, being old and full of days: and ^l his sons Esau and Jacob buried him.

^b ch. 48: 7. ^c Ruth 1: 2, and 4: 11; Micah 5: 2; Matt. 2: 6. ^d 1 Sam. 10: 2; 2 Sam. 18: 18. ^e Mic. 4: 8. ^f ch. 49: 4; 1 Chron. 5: 1; 2 Sam. 16: 22, and 20: 3; 1 Cor. 5: 1. ^g ch. 46: 8; Exod. 1: 2. ^h ch. 13: 18; 23: 2, 19. ⁱ Josh. 14: 15; 15: 13. ^k ch. 15: 15; 25: 8. ^l ch. 25: 9; 49: 31.

phrase does not necessarily point to a post-Mosaic period.

21. *Tower of Edar.* Heb.—*Migdol Eder*—a watch-tower for the flocks, about a mile south, (as *Jerome* has it, where a place is pointed out as “Jacob’s tower,”) or more probably further towards Hebron.

22. The criminal deed of Reuben is here mentioned, as it is also referred to in chap. 49: 4.

23–26. Jacob’s twelve sons are now enumerated; all born in Padan-aram,—excepting only, of course, this last-born, *Benjamin*,—and they are

the fathers of the twelve tribes of Israel.

27–29. *Mamre, Kirjath-Arba.* Here Abraham and Isaac sojourned, and now Jacob comes to dwell here in this covenant homestead, in the hill-country of Judea. Isaac was now in his hundred and sixty-third year, and lived after Jacob’s arrival some seventeen years. Joseph was now about thirteen years of age, and Isaac lived about thirteen years after Joseph was sold. ¶ *Was gathered unto his people*—implying that he joined them on the other side the

CHAPTER XXXVI.

NOW these *are* the generations of Esau, ^a who is Edom.

2 ^b Esau took his wives of the daughters of Canaan; Adah, the daughter of Elon the Hittite, and ^c Aholibamah the daughter of Anah the daughter of Zibeon the Hivite;

a ch. 25 : 30. b ch. 26 : 34. c ver. 25.

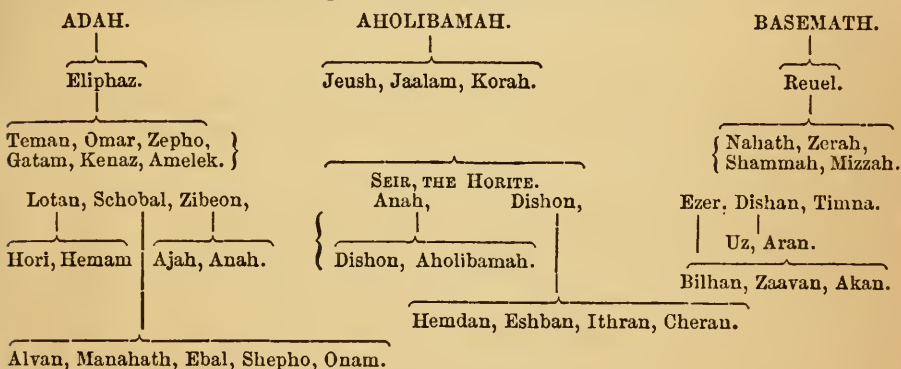
grave in a reunion. ¶ *Esau and Jacob* are here together at the patriarch's grave, performing their last filial duties to their father, and showing a brotherly feeling since their meeting at the brook Jabbok. They were one hundred and twenty years old at their father's death. The record of Isaac's death here is by anticipation, and would have its place in the midst of the history of Joseph, if the order of events were strictly followed. It took place ten years before Jacob and his sons went into Egypt. "Esau and Jacob, having shaken

hands once more over the corpse of their father, their paths diverge hence to meet no more."—*Delitzsch*.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

§ 59. THE GENERATIONS OF ESAU.
THE EDMITES.

The genealogy of Esau's line is now given, but only to show briefly how the promise to him was fulfilled, (ch. 25 : 23 ; 27 : 39,) and then to give place to the history of the chosen covenant line.



1. The surname "*Edom*," here added to his birth-name Esau, is the national designation of his descendants.

2. *Took his wives*. The names of his three wives, as here given, are not the same as given elsewhere, (ch. 26 : 34,) and the father's name, in one case, is different also. (Ch. 28 : 9.) The two wives mentioned in this verse were of the daughters of Canaan. The one named in vs.

3, was a daughter of Ishmael. On comparing the account of his wives whom he married at forty with the present, the first named, Judith, does not appear. (Ch. 26 : 34.) We infer that, in the interval, (forty-seven years,) she died without male issue. The daughter of Elon the Hittite now appears in the first place; and she is called *Adah*, (*the ornament*;) and in ch. 26 : 34 she is called *Basemath*, (*the fragrant*.) ¶ *Aholibamah*.

3 And ^d Bashemath, Ishmael's daughter, sister of Nebajoth.

4 And ^e Adah bare to Esau, Eliphaz; and Bashemath bare Reuel;

5 And Aholibamah bare Jeush, and Jaalam, and Korah; these are the sons of Esau, which were born unto him in the land of Canaan.

6 And Esau took his wives, and his sons, and his daughters, and all the persons of his house, and his cattle, and all his beasts, and all his substance which he had got in the land of Canaan; and went into the country from the face of his brother Jacob.

7 ^f For their riches were more than that they might dwell together: and ^g the land wherein they were strangers could not bear them, because of their cattle.

8 Thus dwelt Esau in ^h mount Seir: ⁱ Esau is Edom.

9 ¶ And these are the generations of Esau the father of the Edomites, in mount Seir:

^d ch. 28 : 9. ^e 1 Chron. 1 : 35. ^f ch. 13 : 6, 11. ^g ch. 17 : 8; 28 : 4. ^h ch. 32 : 3; Deut. 2 : 5; Josh. 24 : 4. ⁱ ver. 1.

Some suppose this is another name for Judith, (*celebrated*,) (ch. 26 : 34,) and means *tent-height*. Others suppose that it is the name of a fourth wife of Esau in the order of time, though here she is classed with the daughter of Elon, because she was of the daughters of Canaan. Else we must suppose that the father's name is here called *Anah*, while in ch. 26 : 34 it is *Beeri* the Hittite, which is not easily explained. *Hengstenberg* thinks "*Beeri*"—*the man of the well*—is a name given to him as a discoverer of the warm springs of Callichoë. (Vs. 24.) This *Anah* is called a *Hivite*, (vs. 2,) a *Hittite*, (ch. 26 : 34,) and a *Horite*, (vs. 20,) which is explained by the last referring to his abode, the middle to his tribe, and the first to his nation. So the third wife, here named *Bashemath*, is called *Mahalath* in ch. 28 : 9. This difference of names is common in the East, where they are significant of qualities or events, and are taken in new circumstances, as, on occasion of marriage, a new name is taken by the woman. It must be remembered, also, that Moses copied from

the genealogical tables, without alteration.

6. The narrative is here taken up from vs. 2. This remove was prior to Jacob's arrival, and in anticipation of Jacob's possessing the promised land, while Esau, also, was drawn towards Mt. Seir by his matrimonial alliance with Ishmael's tribe. ¶ *From before*. Heb.—*From the face of*. Thus Esau's increase is made the providential means of leading him out from the promised land, and of vacating it for the birthright claimant.

7. The reason is here formally stated, as in case of Abraham and Lot.

9. The phrase here repeated as a heading shows a further step in the genealogy after leaving Canaan. Esau became *the father of the Edomites*—the founder of their tribe and nation. ¶ *Mount Seir* is the mountainous range between the Dead Sea and the Elanitic Gulf. (See Josh. 24 : 4; Deut. 2 : 5.) Five sons were born to Esau in Canaan. These increased in the mountain land of Seir to thirteen families. "It is much to be deplored that our frag-

10 These *are* the names of Esau's sons; ^k Eliphaz the son of Adah the wife of Esau; Reuel the son of Bashemath the wife of Esau.

11 And the sons of Eliphaz were, Teman, Omar, Zepho, and Gatam, and Kenaz.

12 And Timna was concubine to Eliphaz, Esau's son; and she bare to Eliphaz, ^l Amalek: these *were* the sons of Adah, Esau's wife.

13 And these *are* the sons of Reuel; Nahath, and Zerah, Shammah, and Mizzah: these were the sons of Bashemath, Esau's wife.

14 ¶ And these were the sons of Aholibamah, the daughter of Anah, the daughter of Zibeon, Esau's wife: and she bare to Esau, Jeush, and Jaalam, and Korah.

15 These *were* dukes of the sons of Esau: the sons of Eliphaz, the first-born son of Esau; duke Teman, duke Omar, duke Zepho, duke Kenaz.

16 Duke Korah, duke Gatam, and duke Amalek: these *are* the dukes *that came* of Eliphaz, in the land of Edom: these *were* the sons of Adah.

17 ¶ And these *are* the sons of Reuel, Esau's son; duke Nahath, duke Zerah, duke Shammah, duke Mizzah: these *are* the dukes *that came* of Reuel, in the land of Edom: these *are* the sons of Bashemath, Esau's wife.

18 ¶ And these *are* the sons of Aholibamah, Esau's wife; duke Jeush, duke Jaalam, duke Korah: these *were* the dukes *that came* of Aholibamah the daughter of Anah, Esau's wife.

19 These *are* the sons of Esau (who is Edom) and these *are* their dukes.

20 ¶ ^m These *are* the sons of Seir ⁿ the Horite, who inhabited the land; Lotan, and Shobal, and Zibeon, and Anah,

k 1 Chron. 1: 35, etc. l Exod. 17: 8, 14; Num. 24: 20; 1 Sam. 15: 2, 3, etc. m 1 Chron. 1: 38. n ch. 14: 6; Deut. 2: 12, 22.

mentary knowledge of ancient ethnography does not enable us to identify many of these names."—*Kalisch*.

11. *Teman*. Among these we find *Eliphaz the Temanite*, in the Book of Job, (ch. 2: 11.)

15. *Dukes*. Heb.—*Alluphim*, or heads, chiefs of the tribes—the *tribe-princes*. This was the third stage of progress in Esau's house that the families increased into clans or tribes, headed each by a *sheikh* or chief, who bore princely power.

20, etc. *Sons of Seir*. These were the natives of the land, aboriginal tribes, which afterwards incorporated with the Edomites, and are here inserted as of importance in the history. ¶ *The Horite*—the dweller in caves such as abound in the mountains of Edom. They were partly subjugated and partly exterminated by the Edomites. (Deut. 2: 12, 22.) Seven sons of Seir and one daughter, Timna, who is mentioned as being the mother of the Amalekites, (vs. 22,) and Aho-

21 And Dishon, and Ezer, and Dishan: these *are* the dukes of the Horites, the children of Seir in the land of Edom.

22 And the children of Lotan were Hori, and Heman: and Lotan's sister *was* Timna.

23 And the children of Shobal *were* these; Alvan, and Manahath, and Ebal, Shepho, and Onam.

24 And these *are* the children of Zibeon; both Ajah, and Anah; this *was that* Anan that found ° the mules in the wilderness, as he fed the asses of Zibeon his father.

25 And the children of Anah *were* these: Dishon, and Aholibamah the daughter of Anah.

26 And these *are* the children of Dishon; Hemdan, and Eshban, and Ithran, and Cheran.

27 The children of Ezer *are* these; Bilhan, and Zaavan, and Akan.

28 The children of Dishan *are* these; Uz, and Aran.

29 These *are* the dukes *that came* of the Horites; duke Lotan, duke Shobal, duke Zibeon, duke Anah,

30 Duke Dishon, duke Ezer, duke Dishan: these *are* the dukes *that came* of Hori, among their dukes in the land of Seir.

31 ¶ And ^p these *are* the kings that reigned in the land of Edom, before there reigned any king over the children of Israel.

o Lev. 19: 19. p 1 Chron. 1: 43.

libamah, (vs. 25,) whose name was also borne by a tribe-prince of the Edomites, (vs. 40, 41.) In a few instances the names in this list differ from the Chronicles; but these are only variations in form, or have arisen from mistakes in the copying. (See *Keil and Delitzsch*.)

24. *Found the mules.* Heb.—*Yemim*. Onk.—*Giants*. Syr.—*Waters*. Arab., Vulg.—*Warm springs*. Sam. Vers.—*Emim*. Most probably the warm springs of Calirrhoe are meant. These are considered of great value, especially as they are near the Dead Sea. The discovery may have had a connection with his feeding the asses of his father, as their faculty and habit of snuffing the moisture may have led to the discovery.

31–39. *The kings in the land of Edom.* (See parallel passage, 1

Chron. 1: 43–50.) This was before the children of Israel had a king. Eight kings are named here. Each came to the throne at the death of his predecessor, yet the descent is not hereditary. The son never succeeds to the father, but one of a different family and place; and in case of the last, the phrase “he died” is wanting. The crown was evidently elective, though afterwards it became hereditary. (1 Kings 11: 14.) The kings and the chiefs or princes were contemporaneous. (Ex. 15: 15; Num. 20: 14, etc.) ¶ *Before there reigned*, etc. This does not imply that Israel had a king when this history was written, which is not so, but that there was a promise of kings to come out of the loins of Israel, (ch. 35: 11; comp. ch. 17: 16,) and Israel had not yet enjoyed the kingly rule. “The idea that Israel

32 And Bela the son of Beor reigned in Edom : and the name of his city *was* Dinhabah.

33 And Bela died, and Jobab the son of Zerah of Bozrah reigned in his stead.

34 And Jobab died, and Husham of the land of Temani reigned in his stead.

35 And Husham died, and Hadad the son of Bedad (who smote Midian in the field of Moab) reigned in his stead : and the name of his city *was* Avith.

36 And Hadad died, and Samlah of Masrekah reigned in his stead.

37 And Samlah died, and Saul of Rehoboth, *by* the river reigned in his stead.

38 And Saul died, and Baal-hanan the son of Achbor reigned in his stead.

39 And Baal-hanan the son of Achbor died, and ^a Hadar reigned in his stead : and the name of his city *was* Pau ; and his wife's name *was* Mehetabel, the daughter of Matred, the daughter of Mezahab.

40 And these *are* the names of ^r the dukes *that came* of Esau according to their families, after their places, by their names ; duke Timnah, duke Alvah, duke Jetheth,

41 Duke Aholibamah, duke Elah, duke Pinon,

42 Duke Kenaz, duke Teman, duke Mibzar.

43 Duke Magdiel, duke Iram : these *be* the dukes of Edom, according to their habitations, in the land of their possession : he *is* Esau, the father of the Edomites.

q 1 Chron. 1: 50, r 1 Chron. 1: 51.

was destined to grow into a kingdom with monarchs of his own family was a hope handed down to the age of Moses, which the long residence in Egypt was well adapted to foster." —*Delitzsch*. Besides, this clause may have a prophetic reference to the Hebrew monarchy four centuries future.

40-43 *The dukes, etc. The seats* of the tribe-princes of Esau, according to their families, are here stated. It is a geographical statement in respect to the capital cities, which only in two instances bore the names of the princes. The House of Edom is thus traced from the individual to the family, and thence

to the tribe or dukedom, and thence to the monarchy, which was elective and based on valor and virtue, (vs. 35.) From this elevation they declined to their predicted subjection. (Ch. 25: 23 ; ch. 27: 40 ; see Deut. 2: 5 ; comp. Numb. 20: 14-21.) *Murphy* takes this list to be that of the hereditary dukes, who were contemporaneous with the last-named sovereign, *Hadar*, and formed his council. He takes Timnah and Aholibamah to be the names of males and not of females, as before, unless we allow a duchess in her own right to have occurred among them. The death of the last sover-

CHAPTER XXXVII.

AND Jacob dwelt in the land ^a wherein his father was a stranger, in the land of Canaan.

2 These *are* the generations of Jacob : Joseph *being* seventeen years old, was feeding the flock with his brethren, and the lad *was* with the sons of Bilhah, and with the sons of Zilpah, his father's wives ; and Joseph brought unto his father ^b their evil report.

a ch. 17 : 8, and 23 : 4, and 36 : 7 ; Heb. 11 : 9. b 1 Sam. 2 : 22, 23, 24.

eign being not recorded, he is supposed to have been contemporaneous with Moses, the author of the history.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

§ 60. GENERATIONS OF JACOB.
JOSEPH SOLD TO MIDIANITE
MERCHANTS.

Here commences the interesting history of Joseph, which continues throughout the book.

1. *Jacob dwelt.* While Esau is noticed as having removed to Mt. Seir, Jacob is recorded as having remained in the promised land, *where his father was a stranger (sojourner.)* Heb.—*In the land of his father's sojournings.* (Chs. 37–45.) The close of his life in Goshen, (chs. 46–50.) (I.) The *first* period embraces the preparatory steps towards the migration into Egypt, as the sale of Joseph, (ch. 37,) and indirectly the alliance of Judah with the Canaanites, (ch. 38,) endangering the Divine call of Israel, and showing the necessity for a temporary removal of the sons of Israel out of Canaan. Joseph's wonderful elevation in Egypt opened the way. (Ch. 39–41.) And then the famine in Canaan led to the journey of the sons to Egypt for corn, and that led to the discovery of their lost brother Joseph, and to the departure of Israel to welcome him. (Chs. 42–45.) (II.) The *second* period opens with

Jacob's migration to Egypt and his settlement in Goshen, (chs. 46–47 : 27,) then gives his closing years and counsels, (ch. 47 : 28–31,) his blessing and burial, (ch. 49,) and Joseph's death, (ch. 50.) There occurs but one Divine manifestation to Jacob during all this period, and that was on the border of Egypt to assure him of his increase in that land to become a nation. And this was the one great step in the history preparatory to the entrance into Canaan. The covenant name Jehovah is here chiefly used as suits the subject.

2. *The generations.* This heading here occurs to further open the *family history* of Jacob. The narrative is here resumed from the return of Jacob to Hebron, which was seventeen years before Isaac's death. (Ch. 35 : 27, notes.) This is something more than an individual history. It is in the plan of the book to show Jacob still in domestic troubles, receiving from God's hand the temporal retribution for his sins, in the suffering occasioned by the loss of the favorite first-born son of his beloved Rachel ; and yet brought out of all the darkness and distress by God's delivering hand, making his trouble turn to joy. Joseph is also to be set forth as a good shepherd, rejected and sold by his brethren, yet their savior. *Joseph in his seventeenth year was shepherding the flock with his brethren, and he a lad, with the*

3 Now Israel loved Joseph more than all his children, because he *was* ^c the son of his old age: and he made him a coat of *many* colors.

4 And when his brethren saw that their father loved him more than all his brethren, they ^d hated him, and could not speak peaceably unto him.

5 ¶ And Joseph dreamed a dream, and he told *it* his brethren: and they hated him yet the more.

6 And he said unto them, Hear, I pray you, this dream which I have dreamed:

7 For ^e behold, we *were* binding sheaves in the field, and lo, my sheaf arose, and also stood upright; and behold, your sheaves stood round about, and made obeisance to my sheaf.

8 And his brethren said to him, Shalt thou indeed reign over us? or shalt thou indeed have dominion over us? And they hated him yet the more for his dreams and for his words.

c ch. 44: 20. d ch. 27: 41, and 49: 23. e ch. 42: 6, 9, and 43: 26, and 44: 14.

sons of Bilhah and the sons of Zilpah, who were nearer his age than the sons of Leah. ¶ *Their evil report.* The evil report of them—of their doings. This was no backbiting, but a filial, confidential report to his father, showing his love of truth and right, and his unwillingness to be partaker of others' sins.

3. Israel's preference for Joseph is here stated and the reasons—especially that he was the son of his old age, the first-born of his beloved Rachel, and also because of his loveliness and virtue. Benjamin was now only an infant. ¶ *Coat of (many) colors.* Such robes, long and costly, made of many pieces of valuable stuffs, tastefully arranged, were regarded as marks of distinction and worn by noblemen and kings' daughters. (2 Sam. 13: 18.) Most understand the robe to have been a tunic with sleeves to the wrist. Some suppose that the *pieces* refer to the fringes and borders of the skirt and sleeves, which were variegated. It is also supposed by some to have been the birthright robe which hav-

ing been forfeited by Reuben was transferred to Joseph, (1 Chron. 5: 1,) and that this inflamed the enmity of his brethren. The father's weakness in showing his preference for Joseph was the source of so great domestic troubles.

4. *They could not speak peaceably unto him.* They did not find it in their hearts to salute him cordially or peacefully—to wish him well—to say "Peace be with thee," according to the usual salutation.

5-8. The jealous enmity of his brethren was increased by his telling them his dreams. God was wont to reveal Himself to His people in dreams; and they were regarded as full of meaning. ¶ *Sheaves.* This was not a picture taken from their shepherd work, but from the reaping, and looked to the results of labor. The idea was plain. Their sheaves paid homage to his. His brethren understood this as the meaning that they were to be in subjection to him. *His dreams* and his words in telling of them roused in them the greater jealousy. He would rather

9 ¶ And he dreamed yet another dream, and told it his brethren, and said, Behold, I have dreamed a dream more : and behold ^f the sun and the moon and the eleven stars made obeisance to me.

10 And he told *it* to his father, and to his brethren : and his father rebuked him, and said unto him, What *is* this dream that thou hast dreamed ? Shall I and thy mother and ^g thy brethren indeed come to bow down ourselves to thee to the earth ?

11 And ^h his brethren envied him ; but his father observed ⁱ the saying.

12 ¶ And his brethren went to feed their father's flock in Shechem.

13 And Israel said unto Joseph, Do not thy brethren feed *the flock* in Shechem ? Come, and I will send thee unto them. And he said to him, Here *am* I.

14 And he said to him, Go, I pray thee, see whether it be well with thy brethren, and well with the flocks ; and bring me word again. So he sent him out of the vale of ^k Hebron, and he came to Shechem.

15 ¶ And a certain man found him, and behold, *he was* wandering in the field ; and the man asked him, saying, What seekest thou ?

f ch. 46 : 29. g ch. 27 : 29. h Acts 7 : 9. i Dan. 7 : 28 ; Luke 2 : 19, 51. k ch. 35 : 27.

have kept silence, if he had consulted a shrewd policy. But he acted honestly and transparently.

9. The second dream he told, though he must have noticed the effect of the first. The sun, (his father,) the moon, (his mother Rachel,) and the eleven stars, (his brethren,) made obeisance to him. The purport of this only deepens the certainty of the others, while the former serves to explain the latter. Rachel was dead, yet the idea was embodied in the dream.

10. *His father rebuked him*, supposing it was only the vanity and ambition of the lad, especially when the father and mother were represented as subordinate to him, which seemed so contrary to the Divine plan.

11. Yet *his father observed (kept) the saying*. (Luke 21 : 19, 51 ; Dan. 7 : 28.) He not only retained it in

his memory, but he took special note of it.

12. Jacob had bought land in Shechem, and hither his flocks were sent for pasture at the proper season. It was over fifty miles from Hebron, (ch. 33 : 19,) and nearly twenty hours' travel. The vale also was well watered.

13, 14. The fond father will have his favorite son go now to these brothers to Shechem, and bring him word of their welfare and of their doings. How blessed was the father in having this trusty boy, whom he could perfectly rely upon for a true, honest, and faithful report of the brothers amidst all the temptations of their absence from home !

15-18. Joseph, not finding the brothers at Shechem, goes on in search of them, expecting, doubtless, to find them near. He is met by a stranger, who gives him the informa-

16 And he said, I seek my brethren: ¹tell me, I pray thee, where they feed *their flocks*.

17 And the man said, They are departed hence: for I heard them say, Let us go to Dothan. And Joseph went after his brethren, and found them in ^m Dothan.

18 And when they saw him afar off, even before he came near unto them, ⁿ they conspired against him to slay him.

19 And they said one to another, Behold, this dreamer cometh.

20 ^o Come now therefore, and let us slay him, and cast him into some pit; and we will say, some evil beast hath devoured him; and we shall see what will become of his dreams.

21 And ^p Reuben heard *it*, and he delivered him out of their hands; and said, Let us not kill him.

¹ Cant. 1: 7. ^m 2 Kings 6: 13. ⁿ 1 Sam. 19: 1; Ps. 31: 13, and 37: 12, 32; and 94: 21; Matt. 27: 1; Mark 14: 1; John 11: 53; Acts 23: 12. ^o Prov. 1: 11, 16; and 6: 17; and 27: 4. ch. 42: 22.

ion he seeks; for he had heard them say, *Let us go to Dothan*, which was twelve Roman miles north of Samaria, (Sebaste,) and about seventeen miles north of Shechem. *Dothan* means *the two cisterns*; and it is probable that the wells about Shechem may have been dry at this time, or out of repair, since the troubles among the Shechemites. ¶ *Conspired*. Heb.—*Cunningly plotted*. The malice was rankling in their hearts, so that as soon as they heard of his coming they planned to destroy him. A fouler, blacker crime than that of Cain,—so deliberate, so concerted among nine brothers. OBSERVE.—How this picture reminds us of the loving Jesus, conspired against most maliciously by sinners of his own people!—How tender his reply to the stranger's inquiry, "*I seek my brethren*." "The Son of man is come to seek and to save them that are lost." How he follows after them till he finds them, Jesus-like!

19. *This dreamer*. Heb.—*This (lord or) master of dreams*.

20. Their murderous plan was to slay him and cast him into a pit or dry well, and then to cover their

crime with a lie, and say that he had been slain by a wild beast, and all to avenge themselves upon him for his dreams. A murderer will lie, and a liar will often be drawn into murder to conceal if possible his falsehood or fraud.

21. Reuben, the eldest brother, was chiefly responsible for this youngest son, and he makes earnest attempt to deliver him. He dissuades them from killing him, and proposes that they cast him into a pit, which ought surely to satisfy their wicked plan to get rid of him, as he must perish there if unrelieved. Reuben, however, sought only to get him free from their power, and in his own time and way to deliver him back to his father. Reuben, though he had been very wicked, (ch. 35: 22,) shows now a tender heart. And knowing that the brothers were bent on putting Joseph out of the way, he devised this plan of satisfying them and saving him. *Wilderness* in the Scripture means the thin unsettled pasture-grounds. In the plain of Esdraelon we came upon several wells, that were large and deep and dry, stoned around the sides, and level at the top with the ground—some of them

22 And Reuben said unto them, Shed no blood, *but* cast him into this pit that *is* in the wilderness, and lay no hand upon him; that he might rid him out of their hands, to deliver him to his father again.

23 ¶ And it came to pass when Joseph was come unto his brethren, that they stript Joseph out of his coat, *his* coat of *many* colors that *was* on him.

24 And they took him, and cast him into a pit: and the pit *was* empty, *there was* no water in it.

25 ^a And they sat down to eat bread: and they lifted up their eyes and looked, and behold, a company of ^r Ishmaelites came from Gilead, with their camels bearing spicery, and ^s balm, and myrrh, going to carry *it* down to Egypt.

26 And Judah said unto his brethren, What profit *is it* if we slay our brother, ^t and conceal his blood?

27 Come, and let us sell him to the Ishmaelites, and ^u let not our hand be upon him; for he *is* ^x our brother, and ^y our flesh; and his brethren were content.

q Prov. 30: 20; Amos 6: 6. r ver. 28: 36. s Jer. 8: 22. t ch. 4: 10; ver. 20; Job 16: 18
u 1 Sam. 18: 17. x ch. 42: 21. y ch. 29: 14.

covered at the mouth and others open.

23. Joseph wore his fancy coat, which was most offensive, as it proved, to these envious brothers as being the token of their father's preference. At once they stripped it off from him. How he was shocked and horrified at their treatment, they themselves afterwards confessed with shame. (Ch. 42: 21.) The pit into which they cast him was empty and no water in it,—probably miry. “A pit of noise,” horrible pit and miry clay. (Ps. 40: 2.) This would seem to be the direct contradiction of his dreams.

25. Their cold, cruel barbarity appears in their sitting down to a meal as soon as the deed was done. ¶ *A company.*—*A caravan.* They are called here “Ishmaelites,” but in vs. 28 and ch. 39: 1, *Midianites*, and in vs. 36. Heb.—*Medanites*. The author uses these several names, for the caravan consisted probably of all these, and in the general “*Arabian*

merchants” are meant. ¶ *Gilead.* Celebrated for a precious balm. (Jer. 8: 22; 46: 11.) The caravan road from Damascus to Egypt touches upon Gilead and passes by Dothan. *Spicery.* A species of gum called *tragacanth*. *Myrrh.* Gum *ladanum*. Egypt was their market. This agrees with the testimony of classic historians, as *Homer* and *Herodotus*, who tell us that Egypt was a store-house for drugs, and a seat of physicians. Od. IV. 228, 231. Herod. 2: 84; 3: 1, 129.

26. Judah here showed some brotherly affection, and began to expostulate with them for seeking his death when they might rather sell him as a slave to this caravan. He appeals to their common sense that it was no gain to them to have him die in this way; that, as they had thrown him into a pit to avoid shedding his blood, this would only be a concealed murder, as he must die there a cruel death; and that, as he was their brother and their

28 Then there passed by ^z Midianites, merchant-men; and they drew and lifted up Joseph out of the pit, ^a and sold Joseph to the Ishmaelites for ^b twenty *pieces* of silver: and they brought Joseph into Egypt.

29 ¶ And Reuben returned unto the pit; and behold, Joseph *was* not in the pit: and he ^c rent his clothes.

30 And he returned unto his brethren, and said, The child ^a *is* not: and I, whither shall I go?

31 And they took ^e Joseph's coat, and killed a kid of the goats, and dipped the coat in the blood:

32 And they sent the coat of *many* colors, and they brought *it* to their father; and said, This have we found; know now whether *it be* thy son's coat or no.

33 And he knew it, and said, *It is* my son's coat; an ^f evil beast hath devoured him: Joseph is without doubt rent in pieces.

^z Judg. 6: 3; ch. 45: 4, 5. ^a Ps. 105: 17; Acts 7: 9. ^b Matt. 27: 9. ^c Job 1: 20. ^d ch. 42: 13, 36; Jer. 31: 15. ^e ver. 23. ^f ver. 20; ch. 44: 23.

flesh, he would avoid laying violent hand upon him. Conscience troubled him, and no wonder. ¶ *His brethren were content.* Heb.—*Hearkened*—acquiesced. His removal so far from home would prevent the offensive realizing of his dreams, and especially if they supposed this had to do with the birthright privilege.

28. The Ishmaelites were the purchasers, though the band are called "Midianites." *Twenty pieces*—the price of a lad under twenty years of age, (Levit. 27: 5,) and Joseph was only about seventeen. The full price for a slave was thirty shekels. (Exod. 21: 32.)

29. Reuben had been absent when this sale was made. Some suppose he had gone a circuitous route to reach the pit and deliver Joseph. This would seem to be implied. *He returned unto the pit* and found Joseph removed, and he was overcome with a brother's grief. He thinks Joseph dead. *The child is not*, and he despairs. *I, whither shall I go?* What could he do? How could he meet the aged and doting father, and give an account of this horrible transaction. (See ch. 42: 22.)

31, 32. They devise a false report to give to their poor father, hoping to cheat his credulity and thus clear themselves. How hardened and heathenish, as though God did not see them, and as though they could hope to escape His wrath. They dipped this fancy coat in the blood of a kid which they killed, and sent the bloody garment to their father, with the pretence that they had found it and that he should judge whether it was Joseph's or not.

33. The aged father recognized the coat which he had put upon the boy in token of his fond affection. He judged that the worst had happened, that he had been devoured by a wild beast. He could think of no other probable or possible case to account for this bloody coat, and he exclaimed, Heb.—*Torn, torn in pieces is Joseph!* OBSERVE.—(1.) Their sin, however artfully concealed, will find them out. (2.) God controls the counsels and acts of men to subserve His wise designs. (3.) Our adversity, so-called, often turns out to be our prosperity. Jesus is the Alpha not only, but the Omega also in all Providence. Wait till you see

34 And Jacob ^g rent his clothes, and put sackcloth upon his loins, and mourned for his son many days.

35 And all his sons and all his daughters ^h rose up to comfort him; but he refused to be comforted; and he said, For I ⁱ will go down into the grave unto my son mourning. Thus his father wept for him.

36 And ^k the Midianites sold him into Egypt unto Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh's, *and* captain of the guard.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

AND it came to pass at that time, that Judah went down from his brethren, and ^a turned in to a certain Adullamite, whose name *was* Hirah.

^g ver. 29: 2 Sam. 3: 31. ^h 2 Sam. 12: 17. ⁱ ch. 42: 38, and 44: 29, 31. ^k ch. 39: 1. ^a ch. 19: 3; 2 Kings 4: 8.

the end before you complain against God. (4.) Joseph, however injured, is still comforted by a consciousness of his mission from God. (5.) Conscience will speak out at last.

34. Jacob was plunged into these new family troubles seemingly more grievous than any he had yet felt. As he had been a deceiver of his father, so he is now deceived by his own sons. He is the man of many sorrows, but this overwhelms him, and no wonder. ¶ *Sackcloth*. The garment of mourning.

35. *To comfort him*. How could these sons comfort him when they were conscious of lying and fraud, and when Reuben, however grieved, dared not tell the facts. Jacob replied to all their condolence. ¶ *For* (you need not attempt to comfort me, *FOR*) *I shall go down into the grave to my son mourning*. How utterly unmanned is he! It is too much for him to bear, even with all the supports of the covenant. How could he give up Joseph, and in such a way? If he had only died a natural death and in his arms. ¶ *The grave*. Heb.—*Sheol*—the place of departed spirits.

36. These merchants who bought Joseph for gain, sold him into Egypt to Potiphar, *chief* of Pharaoh's Guard. Lit.—Chief of his *executioners*—of the king's body-guard who executed his will. It was a high and responsible office. Comp. 1 Kings 2: 29, 34, 35, with 2 Sam. 8: 18; 2 Kings 10: 25; 25: 8, and Jer. 39: 9; 52: 12.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

§ 61. JUDAH.

Jacob while mourning the loss of Joseph, has still a new and different domestic affliction in the case of Judah, who was the first of the sons to marry a Canaanite. This paragraph is of use here in showing the dangers to which the chosen family were subjected of being led into alliance with the Canaanites and corrupted by them, so as to make it important for the Divine Providence to remove the chosen family from these damaging influences. This strange episode therefore belongs properly to "the generations of Jacob."

1. *At that time*. Some have placed this general date before the sale of

2 And Judah ^b saw there a daughter of a certain Canaanite, whose name *was* ^c Shuah; and he took her, and went in unto her.

3 And she conceived, and bare a son; and he called his name ^d Er.

4 And she conceived again, and bare a son; and she called his name ^e Onan.

5 And she yet again conceived and bare a son; and called his name ^f Shelah: and he was at Chezib when she bare him.

6 And Judah ^g took a wife for Er his first-born, whose name *was* Tamar.

7 And ^h Er, Judah's first-born, was wicked in the sight of the LORD; ⁱ and the LORD slew him.

b ch. 34: 2. c 1 Chron. 2: 3. d ch. 46: 12; Numb. 26: 19. e ch. 46: 12; Numb. 26: 19. f ch. 46: 12; Numb. 26: 20. g ch. 21: 21. h ch. 46: 12; Numb. 26: 19. i 1 Chron. 2: 3.

Joseph. But we find Judah evidently with his brothers at that time, and not removed from them as is here recorded. *Kurtz, Keil and Delitzsch*, etc., maintain that Hezron and Hamul were born in Egypt, and not in Canaan. So *Heng.* And the twenty-three years which elapsed between the taking of Joseph into Egypt and the migration of Jacob thither, is time enough for all that is recorded in this chapter. "If we suppose that Judah, who was twenty years old when Joseph was sold, went to Adullam soon afterwards and married there, his three sons might have been born four or five years after Joseph's captivity. And if his eldest son was born about a year and a half after the sale of Joseph, and he married him to Tamar when he was fifteen years old and gave her to his second son a year after that, Onan's death would occur at least five years before Jacob's removal to Egypt. Time enough therefore both for the generation and birth of the twin sons of Judah by Tamar, and for Judah's two journeys into Egypt with his brethren to buy corn."—*Keil and Delitzsch.* (See ch. 46: 8.). Those who hold that Hezron and Tamul, the sons of Pharez, were born in Canaan, must set the time further back,

(say about Jacob's sojourning in Shechem,) as do *Murphy, Baumgarten, Bush*, etc.,—and this is consistent with the general phrase "at that time;" but Judah seems not yet to have set up his separate household when Joseph's sale took place. (See *Henry. Pent.* vol. II p. 290.) ¶ *Went down* from Hebron, (ch. 37: 14,) to the lowland of Judah bordering on Philistia. (Josh. 15: 35.) Heb.—*He pitched up to a man of Adullam*, in his neighborhood, for friendly intercourse. Why he so separated does not appear, but it seems to be the beginning of mischief, and was doubtless a wrong step on his part. ¶ *Canaanite.* This was a forbidden connection for the covenant family.

3-5. These particulars are here given because Judah was he through whom the Messiah was to come. ¶ *Chezib.* In the south portion of the low country of Judah. The place is mentioned that the descendants of Shelah might know the birth-place of their ancestors,—unnecessary in the case of the others, who died childless.

6-7. This wife of Er was probably a Canaanite also, and he was smitten to death by God for his wickedness. Whereupon his brother Onan was commanded by his father to act the

8 And Judah said unto Onan, Go in unto ^k thy brother's wife, and marry her, and raise up seed to thy brother.

9 And Onan knew that the seed should not be ^l his: and it came to pass, when he went in unto his brother's wife, that he spilled *it* on the ground, lest that he should give seed to his brother.

10 And the thing which he did displeased the LORD: wherefore he slew ^m him also.

11 Then said Judah to Tamar his daughter-in-law, ⁿ Remain a widow at thy father's house, till Shelah my son be grown; (for he said, Lest peradventure he die also as his brethren *did*); and Tamar went and dwelt ^o in her father's house.

12 ¶ And in process of time, the daughter of Shuah, Judah's wife, died: and Judah ^p was comforted, and went up unto his sheep-shearers to Timnath, he and his friend Hirah the Adullamite.

13 And it was told Tamar, saying, Behold thy father-in-law goeth up ^q to Timnath to shear his sheep.

14 And she put her widow's garments off from her, and covered her with a vail, and wrapped herself, and ^r sat in an open place, which *is* by the way to Timnath: for she saw ^s that Shelah was grown, and she was not given unto him to wife.

15 When Judah saw her, he thought her *to be* a harlot; because she had covered her face.

^k Deut. 25: 5; Matt. 22: 24. ^l Deut. 25: 6. ^m ch. 46: 12; Numb. 26: 19. ⁿ Ruth 1: 13. ^o Lev. 22: 13. ^p 2 Sam. 13: 39. ^q Josh. 15: 10, 57; Judg. 14: 1. ^r Prov. 7: 12. ^s ver. 11, 26.

part of a husband to the widow according to the custom of Levirate marriage, afterwards legalized by Moses. In order that the family might not die out, and the covenant line perish, this was an important provision. (Ruth 4: 10.) Onan, however, proved false, and his crime of violating God's ordinance by a shameful abomination was also punished with death. Thus the covenant household seems degraded and disgraced. But the salvation lies not with them, but with God.

11. The death of these two sons makes Judah hesitate about giving her the third, perhaps from a superstitious idea that there was something fatal in the connection. But he gives the excuse that Shelah was too young to marry, and advises the widow to return to her father's house, accord-

ing to the custom in such case of having no children. (Lev. 22: 13.) Meanwhile she was to regard herself as the betrothed wife of Shelah, though he did not intend that he should be her husband.

12-17. Tamar, seeing that she is unfairly denied the promised marriage with Shelah, and knowing how heathenish Judah had become by his unlawful connections, planned revenge and sought to seduce him. Her method was truly heathenish, as might have been expected. She succeeded to his shame. *In process of time.* Heb.—*The days were multiplied.* Some considerable time had elapsed, and Shelah had grown up, and Tamar had waited in vain. ¶ *Timnath.* A town on the mountains of Judah, (Josh. 15: 57,) about seven miles south of Hebron.

16 And he turned unto her by the way, and said, Go to, I pray thee, let me come in unto thee; (for he knew not that she *was* his daughter-in-law;) and she said, What wilt thou give me that thou mayest come in unto me?

17 And he said, ^t I will send *thee* a kid from the flock: and she said, ^u Wilt thou give *me* a pledge, till thou send *it*?

18 And he said, What pledge shall I give thee? And she said, ^x Thy signet, and thy bracelets, and thy staff that *is* in thy hand: and he gave *it* her, and came in unto her, and she conceived by him.

19 And she arose and went away and ^y laid by her vail from her, and put on the garments of her widowhood.

20 And Judah sent the kid by the hand of his friend the Adulamite, to receive *his* pledge from the woman's hand: but he found her not.

21 Then he asked the men of that place, saying, Where *is* the harlot that *was* openly by the wayside? And they said, There was no harlot in this *place*.

22 And he returned to Judah, and said, I cannot find her; and also the men of the place said, *that* there was no harlot in this *place*.

23 And Judah said, Let her take *it* to her, lest we be shamed: behold, I sent this kid, and thou hast not found her.

24 ¶ And it came to pass about three months after, that it was told to Judah, saying, Tamar thy daughter-in-law hath ^z played the harlot; and also, behold, she *is* with child by whoredom. And Judah said, Bring her forth, ^a and let her be burnt.

^t Ezek. 16: 33. ^u ver. 20. ^x ver. 25. ^y ver. 14. ^z Judg. 19: 2. ^a Lev. 21: 9; Deut. 22: 21.

The sheep-shearing was a holiday with the shepherds. *She sat by the gate of Enayim* the same as *Enam* in the lowland of Judah. (Josh. 15: 34.)

18. *Thy bracelets.* Heb.—*Strings.* The signet-ring or seal was suspended from the neck upon the bosom by a silken cord, and lay in the folds of the garments, and was kept with great care. These seals were also worn upon the hand by the Babylonians and Egyptians, and were the tokens of authority, and pledges of covenant fidelity. Giving one's seal to another was indeed giving up to another the power to act in one's

stead in transactions requiring the seals. The loss of one's seal was therefore a very serious calamity.

23. When Judah hastened to redeem his pledges, and Tamar could not be found, he exclaims with chagrin, "*Let her take them* (the articles pledged) to her, (let her keep them for herself) *that we may not become a reproach.*" Judah is now anxious and disappointed at losing his seal, but he is more in dread of the open disgrace, and therefore will let it go rather than make a noise about it. He is afraid now of exposure.

24. *Let her be burnt.* This is a severe punishment ordered by Judah

25 When she *was* brought forth, she sent to her father-in-law, saying, By the man whose these *are*, *am* I with child: and she said, ^b Discern, I pray thee, whose *are* these, ^c the signet, and bracelets, and staff.

26 And Judah ^d acknowledged *them*, and said, ^e She hath been more righteous than I; because that ^f I gave her not to Shelah my son: and he knew her again ^g no more.

27 ¶ And it came to pass in the time of her travail, that behold, twins *were* in her womb.

28 And it came to pass when she travailed, that *the one* put out *his* hand; and the midwife took and bound upon his hand a scarlet thread, saying, This came out first.

29 And it came to pass as he drew back his hand, that behold, his brother came out; and she said, How hast thou broken forth? *this* breach *be* upon thee: therefore his name was called ^h Pharez.

30 And afterward came out his brother that had the scarlet thread upon his hand; and his name was called Zarah.

^b ch. 37: 32. ^c ver. 18. ^d ch. 37: 33. ^e 1 Sam. 24: 17. ^f ver. 14. ^g Job 34: 31, 32. ^h ch. 46: 12; Num. 26: 20; 1 Chron. 2: 4; Matt. 1: 3.

as head of his tribe, and he himself a guilty party in the crime. He did not know as yet how his own criminality was to be exposed. The capital punishment under the law afterward, was by stoning. (Deut. 22: 20, 21, 24.) Burning was the punishment only in aggravated cases. (Lev. 20: 14; 21: 9.) Men so severely treat in others the very crimes they themselves have perpetrated.

25. When Judah is confronted now with his own pledges, he is driven to confess. *She is more in the right than I, for therefore* (to bring this about) *have I not given her to Shelah my son?* He now acknowledges that in withholding his son from the widow and denying her right he had brought about this shameful and sad result. It is evident from the narrative that she was driven to this stratagem, not from base lewdness, but to obtain through Judah himself the covenant posterity of which he was wrongfully depriving her.

27. Tamar became the mother of

twin sons in circumstances somewhat like the birth of Jacob and Esau. (Ch. 25: 25, 26.) Perez, in the struggle before birth obtained the primogeniture, and in the tenth generation David, the king of Israel descended from him. (Ruth 4: 18-22.) *Tamar*, therefore, has a place as one of the female ancestors in the genealogy of *Jesus Christ*.

29. *Why hast thou broken forth?* (Matt. 1: 3.) Keil and Delitzsch read, *What a breach hast thou made for thy part? Upon thee the breach, (the blame of it.)*

We see the mischief of unholy alliances in life, leading away from God into the unholy habits of such, and into the dreadful miseries consequent. So the apostle exhorts, "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers, for what concord hath light with darkness?" Instead of the wicked party being converted by the influence of the good, the good is more commonly led astray by the wicked, as here in the case of Judah.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

AND Joseph was brought down to Egypt: and ^a Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh, captain of the guard, an Egyptian, ^b bought him of the hands of the Ishmaelites, which had brought him down thither.

2 And ^c the LORD was with Joseph, and he was a prosperous man: and he was in the house of his master the Egyptian.

3 And his master saw that the LORD *was* with him, and that the LORD ^d made all that he did to prosper in his hand.

a ch. 37: 36; Ps. 105: 17. b ch. 37: 28. c ver. 21; ch. 21: 22, and 26: 24, 28; and 28: 15; 1 Sam. 16: 18; and 18: 14, 28; Acts 7: 9. d Ps. 1: 3.

This chapter is given with all its shameful details to show in full the connection of our Lord with Abraham as detailed by Matthew, and this is done faithfully and without concealment of the shame; showing thus how our Lord "made Himself of no reputation," and "despised the shame" in his redeeming work for sinners.

In the light of Judah's faithless character Joseph's integrity and virtue will now more clearly appear.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

§ 62. JOSEPH SOLD TO POTIPHAR IN EGYPT. HIS TEMPTATION AND IMPRISONMENT.

The "generations of Jacob" are now resumed in the further history of Joseph. At the early age of seventeen, sold as a slave into a strange country and among heathen, what could bear him up but such firm faith as he had, especially from revelations made to him of his coming greatness.

1. *Pharaoh* from *Phra*, meaning the *sun*, as *Potiphar* means, He who is of the sun. The facts of his being sold into Egypt to Potiphar, by the Ishmaelite merchants who bought him of his recreant brothers, are here repeated, from ch. 37: 36. Though the band are called *Midianites* as the

general term, yet the transaction of purchase and sale seems to have been *at the hands of* the Ishmaelites who belonged to the caravan.

2. *The Lord*—Jehovah. This is the covenant name in which God appears in His special redemptive capacity. God will now show Himself to be Jehovah. He was with Joseph, and this is the great secret of this wonderful history—of Joseph's deliverances in every peril, and of his prosperity notwithstanding his being so offcast by his own brethren. "When my father and mother forsake me, then Jehovah will take me up." ¶ *A prosperous man*. Heb.—*A man causing success—successful*. "Whatsoever he doeth shall prosper." (Ps. 1, and vs. 3.)

3. Thus his heathen master saw that God's favor was manifest to him in his wonderful success. (See ch. 26: 28; ch. 30: 27.) Men who do not know God are made to see how remarkably His people are cared for and prospered, and how safe and valuable such men are. Thus his favor with God gained him favor with men. So our Lord Himself grew in favor with God and men. (Luke 2: 52.) Joseph was advanced to the highest position in Potiphar's house—was made *overseer*, having charge of all the affairs of the household.

4 And Joseph ^e found grace in his sight, and he served him: and he made him ^f overseer over his house, and all *that* he had he put into his hand.

5 And it came to pass from the time *that* he had made him overseer in his house, and over all that he had, that ^g the LORD blessed the Egyptian's house for Joseph's sake; and the blessing of the LORD was upon all that he had in the house, and in the field.

6 And he left all that he had in Joseph's hand; and he knew not aught he had, save the bread which he did eat: and Joseph ^h was a goodly *person*, and well favored.

7 ¶ And it came to pass after these things, that his master's wife cast her eyes upon Joseph: and she said, ⁱ Lie with me.

8 But he refused, and said unto his master's wife, Behold, my master wotteth not what *is* with me in the house, and he hath committed all that he hath to my hand.

9 *There is* none greater in this house than I; neither hath he kept back any thing from me, but thee, because thou *art* his wife: ^k how then can I do this great wickedness, and ^l sin against God?

^e ch. 18 : 3, and 19 : 19; ver. 21. ^f Gen. 24 : 2. ^g ch. 30 : 27. ^h 1 Sam. 16 : 12. ⁱ 2 Sam. 13 : 11. ^k Prov. 6 : 29, 32. ^l ch. 20 : 6; Lev. 6 : 2; 2 Sam. 12 : 13; Ps. 51 : 4.

5. From the time of Joseph's elevation, the blessing of God upon the house and the field was manifest. God chooses often to bless men for His people's sake, so as to show the advantage of belonging to His people and of having His covenant care, even as He blessed the house of Obed-Edom for the sake of the ark that was there.

6. *He left all that he had in Joseph's hand, and he did not know anything with (or near) him but the bread he did eat.* So entirely did he give up all his household affairs to the keeping of Joseph, that he knew only of his meals as they came on. The reference is to castes in Egypt, and to the laws concerning meats enforced in that land. ¶ *A goodly person.* Heb.—*Beautiful of form, and beautiful of appearance*, in form and feature. (Ch. 29 : 17.) This statement prepares the way for what follows.

7-9. Potiphar's wife was charmed by Joseph's beauty and made base proposals to him. But he had the

strong religious principle to stand firm against the shocking sin. He refuses on the double ground of being entrusted with his master's confidence, which he would scorn to abuse, and on the ground of his duty to God, whom he would not offend by this great sin. Gratitude to his master and gratitude to God restrained him. "*How can I do such a thing?*" He sees how he is in the power of this wicked woman, who could easily revenge herself upon him for refusing her command. He does not utter any reproach, but pleads the impossibility in his case, and yet calls the deed by its right name—*this great wickedness*. The immorality of Egyptian women has long been proverbial. In modern times Mohammed Ali abolished the lewd practice of the dancing women, so far as to make the Alna dance visible only by women and not by men. This we heard spoken of in Cairo as a very important reform.

10 And it came to pass, as she spake to Joseph day by day, that he hearkened not unto her, to lie by her, *or* to be with her.

11 And it came to pass about this time, that *Joseph* went into the house to do his business; and *there was* none of the men of the house there within.

12 And ^m she caught him by his garment, saying, Lie with me: and he left his garment in her hand, and fled, and got him out.

13 And it came to pass, when she saw that he had left his garment in her hand, and was fled forth,

14 That she called unto the men of her house, and spake unto them, saying, See, he hath brought in an Hebrew unto us to mock us: he came in unto me to lie with me, and I cried with a loud voice:

15 And it came to pass, when he heard that I lifted up my voice and cried, that he left his garment with me, and fled, and got him out.

16 And she laid up his garment by her, until his lord came home.

17 And she ⁿ spake unto him according to these words, saying, The Hebrew servant which thou hast brought unto us, came in unto me to mock me:

18 And it came to pass as I lifted up my voice and cried, that he left his garment with me, and fled out.

19 And it came to pass, when his master heard the words of his wife, which she spake unto him, saying, After this manner did thy servant to me; that his ^o wrath was kindled.

m Prov. 7: 13, etc. n Exod. 23: 1; Ps. 120: 3. o Prov. 6: 34, 35.

11, 13. This abandoned woman, after being daily refused, took occasion when alone in the house with him to attempt compulsion. ¶ *About this time.* Heb.—*At this day* (of the occurrence.) This particular day. He makes most violent resistance, even to the loss of his garment. “Joseph is thus stripped of his garment a second time—then for envy now for lust.”—*Bp. Hall.*

14. She now seeks revenge upon him whom she cannot entrap. She called her house servants and said, *See, he* (her husband of whom she speaks so contemptuously) *has brought in to us a Hebrew man to*

mock us (to act the part of a wanton in the household.)

15. *Left his garment with me—by my side* (not in my hand) as was the truth.

16, 17. She tells to them her unblushing lie, and takes care to do the same to her husband. ¶ *She laid up his garment by her* so as to make it appear as if he had left it there. ¶ *To mock me*, to insult me by lewdness.

19-21. She had thrown the blame heavily upon her husband. This would excite his wrath. While he may not have fully believed her statements, yet he must vindicate his hon-

20 And Joseph's master took him, and ^p put him into the ^a prison, a place where the king's prisoners *were* bound: and he was there in the prison.

21 ¶ But the Lord was with Joseph, and showed him mercy, and ^r gave him favor in the sight of the keeper of the prison.

22 And the keeper of the prison ^s committed to Joseph's hand all the prisoners that *were* in the prison; and whatsoever they did there, he was the doer of *it*.

23 The keeper of the prison looked not to any thing *that was* under his hand; because ^t the Lord was with him: and *that* which he did, the Lord made *it* to prosper.

^p Ps. 105: 18; 1 Pet. 2: 19. ^q ch. 40: 3, 15, and 41: 14. ^r Exod. 3: 21, and 11: 3, and 12: 36; Ps. 106: 46; Prov. 16: 7; Acts 7: 9, 10. ^s ch. 40: 3, 4. ^t ver. 2, 3.

or. He thrusts Joseph into prison.

¶ *Into the prison—into the house of enclosure, called (ch. 41: 8,) a dungeon, and here described as a place where the king's prisoners (state prisoners) were confined.* This was a mild punishment. The penalty in Egypt for an attempt at adultery was one thousand blows. In Ps. 106: 18, Joseph's imprisonment is referred to: "Whose feet they hurt with fetters!" Yet, even in prison, Jehovah his Covenant God, was with him, and made his deliverance most remarkable. "What safety is there against great adversaries when even arguments of innocence are used to convict of evil?"—*Bp. Hall.* ¶ *Gave him favor.* This is in the hand of God as the king's heart is. ¶ *Keeper of the prison.* Heb.—*Keeper of the home of the tower*—an officer having charge of the prisoners. Here again Joseph was found to be the man for special trust, reliable and fit for most responsible duties, because he was a truly pious man. The favor of the Lord is our highest security against all possible harm. (Prov. 8: 35; 12: 2.) If God be for us, who can be against us?

22. By reason of this Divine favor which followed him to the prison, Joseph was made the head and chief of all its affairs. The prisoners were commonly set to hard labor, and he

had the office of superintendent devolved upon him (under-keeper;) besides another position of a responsible kind. (Ch. 40: 4.) ¶ *And what.* Heb.—*And the whole which they were doing there he was doing.* Everything which had to be done there was done through him as the factor and principal.

23. Heb.—*The keeper of the prison was not seeing anything in his hand, because Jehovah was with him, and what he was doing Jehovah made to prosper.* (Ps. 1: 3.)

Joseph in Egypt is a sole representative of the church among the heathen and in many respects reminds us of Jesus in the world—beloved by his father, hated by his brethren, conspired against, betrayed into the hands of enemies, and sustained in all his sufferings, proving himself a sufferer for his enemies and betrayers, the lord of the worldly realm, the saviour of the household, to whom every knee was brought to bow, and every tongue to confess, in whom the church was represented and developed. "This wronged and afflicted Joseph is justified, exalted, raised to reign over all the land, to wield all royal sovereignty and power, to be a light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of his own people Israel."—*Candlish.* NOTE. (1.) The basis and security of all true

CHAPTER XL.

AND it came to pass after these things, *that* the ^abutler of the king of Egypt and *his* baker had offended their lord the king of Egypt.

2 And Pharaoh was ^bwroth against two of his officers, against the chief of the butlers, and against the chief of the bakers.

3 ^c And he put them in ward in the house of the captain of the guard, into the prison, the place where Joseph *was* bound.

4 And the captain of the guard charged Joseph with them, and he served them; and they continued a season in ward.

a Neh. 1: 11. b Prov. 16: 14. c ch. 39: 20, 23.

prosperity lies in the favor of God. (2.) The source of strength in resisting temptation, however sudden and severe, is in the fear of God. This is decisive, admits no parleying nor doubt. What God forbids cannot possibly be entertained for a moment. (3.) The ground of comfort and hope in false accusations and persecutions is in God's righteous control of all issues and events. (Ps. 37.)

CHAPTER XL.

§ 63. JOSEPH INTERPRETS DREAMS.

Unless Joseph has the strongest faith he must regard his dreams as beyond any likelihood of fulfilment. Away from home and brethren, a slave in a prison, in a strange land, how can he hope for the exaltation which his dreams encouraged him to expect? But God is his friend, and God is greater than his enemies. He is now brought by God's wonder-working Providence to be an arbiter of destiny and the dispenser of life and death to his fellow-prisoners in a way to prepare for his own exaltation. How strange and wonderful is the chain of events! How absolute is God's control over the world

of mind; swaying all characters and classes to do his bidding!

1. *The butler* was the cupbearer and overseer of the wine-making and storing and serving, an important officer of the king. (2 Kings 18: 17.) He was now a state prisoner (Isa. 36: 2) for an offence against Pharaoh. ¶ *His baker*. This was another officer in trust of the king's bread and of its making; and his post was one of high trust, because they who had the charge of the food of the king might easily poison him. "Abu Moslem is said to have consumed at his table every day three thousand tarts, one thousand sheep, besides oxen and fowls, and to have had a thousand cooks."

2, 3. *Pharaoh was wroth against (these) two of his officers, and put them in custody in the house of the captain of the guard*, (the trabantes,) *the prison where Joseph himself was confined*. This prison was connected with the keeper's house. This seems purely incidental that they should be put in the same prison with Joseph. But see what important results follow from this as a Divine Providence.

4. *The captain of the guard*, (This was Potiphar,) *charged Joseph with them—made him to visit (wait on) them*, (not to watch them.) *He served*

5 ¶ And they dreamed a dream both of them, each man his dream in one night, each man according to the interpretation of his dream; the butler and the baker of the king of Egypt, which *were* bound in the prison.

6 And Joseph came in unto them in the morning, and looked upon them, and behold, they *were* sad.

7 And he asked Pharaoh's officers that *were* with him in the ward of his lord's house, saying, Wherefore look ye *so* sadly to-day?

8 And they said unto him, ^a We have dreamed a dream, and *there is* no interpreter of it. And Joseph said unto them, ^e Do not interpretations *belong* to God? Tell me *them*, I pray you.

9 And the chief butler told his dream to Joseph, and said unto him, In my dream, behold, a vine *was* before me;

10 And in the vine *were* three branches: and it *was* as though it budded, *and* her blossoms shot forth; and the clusters thereof brought forth ripe grapes:

11 And Pharaoh's cup *was* in mine hand: and I took the grapes, and pressed them into Pharaoh's cup, and I gave the cup into Pharaoh's hand.

12 And Joseph said unto him, ^f This is the interpretation of it: The three branches ^g *are* three days:

13 Yet within three days shall Pharaoh ^h lift up thine head, and restore thee unto thy place: and thou shalt deliver Pharaoh's cup into his hand, after the former manner when thou wast his butler.

^d ch. 41: 15. ^e ch. 41: 16; Dan. 2: 11, 28, 47. ^f ver. 18: ch. 41, 12, 25; Judg. 7: 14; Dan. 2: 36; and 4: 19. ^g ch. 41: 26. ^h 2 Kings 25: 27; Ps. 3: 3; Jer. 52: 31.

them, according to his appointment, waiting on them with supplies for their necessities, etc. ¶ *A season.* Heb.—*Days.* Some suppose a year—since the king's previous anniversary.

5. They both *dreamed the same night*, which fact tended to strengthen the impression and assure of the result as impending. ¶ *According to the interpretation*, etc. Each had a dream evidently suited to his case, so as to impress each with its application to himself.

6, 7. The men were *troubled* with the solemn import of the dream and with their anxiety to discover the meaning. Joseph entered their apartment at his morning work, and observed their troubled countenance and inquired of them the reason.

8 It was that they had a dream, but no interpreter of it, and were therefore left to the worst forebodings. Joseph, true to his religion, insists that interpretations *belong to God*, and inquires what were the dreams.

9. The butler's dream was naturally in his department of business. "A dream cometh through the multitude of business." A vine with three branches (perfection) passing through the processes of budding, blossoming, and fruit-bearing. The butler saw himself pressing the ripe grapes into the royal goblet and presenting it to Pharaoh.

12, 13. The interpretation was natural; but the time was revealed by God. Heb.—*The three branches, three days they.* There is no verb expressed. *Represent* is the idea

14 But ⁱ think on me when it shall be well with thee, and ^k shew kindness, I pray thee, unto me, and make mention of me unto Pharaoh, and bring me out of this house :

15 For indeed I was stolen away out of the land of the Hebrews ; ^l and here also have I done nothing that they should put me into the dungeon.

16 When the chief baker saw that the interpretation was good, he said unto Joseph, I also *was* in my dream, and behold, *I had* three white baskets on mine head :

17 And in the uppermost basket *there was* of all manner of bake-meats for Pharaoh : and the birds did eat them out of the basket upon mine head.

18 And Joseph answered and said, ^m This *is* the interpretation thereof : The three baskets *are* three days :

19 ⁿ Yet within three days shall Pharaoh lift up thine head from off thee, and shall hang thee on a tree ; and the birds shall eat thy flesh from off thee.

i Luke 23 : 42. k Josh. 2 : 12 ; 1 Sam. 20 : 14, 15 ; 2 Sam. 9 : 1 ; 1 Kings 2 : 7. l ch. 39 : 20. m ver. 12. n ver. 13.

understood. The butler saw himself again at his work, and so he was to be restored within three days to his office. *His head lifted up. To lift up the face* is the Heb. phrase for acquittal of crime.

14. But. Joseph here puts in a plea for himself. Heb.—*But remember me with thee, according as it shall go well to thee, etc., and cause me to come forth from this house.*

15. Heb.—*For stolen I was stolen, etc., (carried away secretly and by force, and hence I am not in this country of my own choice,) out of the land of the Hebrews.* And hence, too, he was of a superior class to that from which slaves were commonly taken. This phrase is no interpolation. Judea was probably known by this name in Egypt, which Abraham had visited from that land. It may also favor the presumption that the land was inhabited by Hebrews before Canaan took possession of it. (See *Murphy*.) *And also here I have not done anything that they have put me into the hole, (dungeon.)* He pleads

his innocence of crime and asks for the butler's intercession with the king against Potiphar's unjust imprisonment of him. Joseph's gift of interpretation did not include a prophecy of his own release.

16. The chief baker now, encouraged, tells his dream, which was also in his department of business, and the number *three*, as before, indicating the days. ¶ *Baskets on my head.* This was the method of men in carrying baskets, as we see from the figures on Egyptian monuments, while the women carried on the shoulders. "*Baskets of white bread,*" and in the top basket all kind of food for Pharaoh, pastry. Lit.—*The work of a baker.* The ancient Egyptians were called by the Greeks in derision *bread-eaters*, because they made this their chief article of food. The dough was kneaded with the hands or feet and formed into rolls, and these (sprinkled over the top with seeds) were shaped in the form of an ox, sheep, or fish, etc.

19. Instead of *lifting up the head* in

20 ¶ And it came to pass the third day, *which was* Pharaoh's^o birthday, that he^p made a feast unto all his servants; and he^q lifted up the head of the chief butler and of the chief baker among his servants.

21. And he^r restored the chief butler unto his butlership again, and^s he gave the cup into Pharaoh's hand :

22 But he^t hanged the chief baker, as Joseph had interpreted to them.

23 Yet did not the chief butler remember Joseph, but^u forgot him.

CHAPTER XLI.

AND it came to pass at the end of two full years, that Pharaoh dreamed: and behold, he stood by the river.

^o Matt. 14: 6. ^p Mark 6: 21. ^q ver. 13: 19; Matt. 25: 19. ^r ver. 13. ^s Neh. 2: 1. ^t ver. 19. ^u Job. 19: 14; Ps. 31: 12; Eccl. 9, 15, 16; Amos. 6: 6.

acquittal it should be lifted in death. ¶ *Hang thee on a tree*, as accursed. (Deut. 21: 22, 23.)

20. *Pharaoh's birthday*,—a season of royal festivities and solemnities. The fulfilment was according to Joseph's interpretation. ¶ *Lifted up the head*. In Exod. 30: 12 and Numb. 1: 49 this phrase is used in the sense of *numbering*, and, if so here, then it would mean that in recounting his officers, Pharaoh *numbered* these—took their poll.—*Turner*. *Gesenius* regards this phrase as elliptical here, for the full expression to *lift up the head out of prison*; such places of confinement being usually under ground. (See 2 Kings 25: 27.)

22. *He hanged*. This part of the fulfilment proved Joseph's interpretation to have been divinely dictated. This was not hanging by the neck, but the exposing of the body on a tree after beheading. As to this practice, which was common in Egypt, it was forbidden by the Jewish law that the body be exposed after sunset on the day of execution. (Deut. 21: 22.)

23. The man, so befriended by Joseph and appealed to for a kind remembrance when he should be re-

leased, failed to do him the service requested. Thus the poor Hebrew prisoner is left to his simple faith in God for the realization of his own dreams, when it seems now further off than ever. Meanwhile God is so ordering events as to make Joseph's deliverance due more directly to Himself than to any human agency. Joseph is encouraged by the gift of interpreting the dreams to rely on God as his counsellor and friend, who, in His own good time and way, will release him also from the prison. OBSERVE.—How hardening is the effect of worldly prosperity! How often it leads to forgetfulness of old friends and of sacred obligations! How our ingratitude towards the New Testament Joseph, in forgetting all that he has done for us in our bondage, will fill us with confusion at the great day!

CHAPTER XLI.

§ 64. JOSEPH INTERPRETS PHARAOH'S DREAM. SEVEN YEARS FAMINE.

1-4.—*Two full years—two years of days—in days*. Two years from

2 And behold, there came up out of the river seven well-favored kine and fat-fleshed; and they fed in a meadow.

3 And behold, seven other kine came up after them out of the river, ill-favored and lean-fleshed; and stood by the *other* kine upon the brink of the river.

4 And the ill-favored and lean-fleshed kine did eat up the seven well-favored and fat kine. So Pharaoh awoke.

5 And he slept and dreamed the second time: and behold, seven ears of corn came up upon one stalk, rank and good.

6 And behold, seven thin ears and blasted with the east wind sprung up after them.

7 And the seven thin ears devoured the seven rank and full ears. And Pharaoh awoke, and behold, *it was* a dream.

8 And it came to pass in the morning, ^athat his spirit was troubled; and he sent and called for all ^bthe magicians of Egypt, and all the ^cwise men thereof: and Pharaoh told them his dreams; but *there was* none that could interpret them unto Pharaoh.

^a Dan. 2: 1, and 4: 5, 19. ^b Exod. 7: 11, 22; Isa. 29: 14; Dan. 1: 20, and 2: 2, and 4: 7.
^c Matt. 2: 1.

the release of the chief butler, Joseph was still kept in prison, or it may mean two full years from his imprisonment. ¶ *The river*—Nile. *The river of Egypt*, the source of its fertility and bounty. He saw seven fat cows come up from the river. The cow, in Egypt, is the symbol of nature's fruitfulness, of agriculture and of the earth. The goddess of the earth, Isis, was worshipped in this form, like the sacred bull *Apis*, and not allowed as food. These seven cows fed in a meadow *on the green marsh of reeds and bulrushes*. *Seven* is the sacred number. Seven lean, gaunt, ugly-looking cows came up after the others and devoured them.

5. He had a second dream conveying the same general idea, but more distinctly. *Corn* is the term for grain in general, and it is the expression of nature's bounty. The seven full ears represent fertility, while the seven thin, blasted ears represent dearth. Seven ears sprouting on one stalk refer to the "Egyp-

tian wheat" cultivated in the Nile valley and the chief source of the nation's wealth. These full ears were devoured by the thin, blasted ones, so that they vanished beside them. The east wind here is the *Chamsia* from the south-east or desert of Arabia. It withers every green thing if it continues to blow any time.

7. At the first dream Pharaoh awoke and did not seem troubled, but when it was thus repeated he was startled. *Behold! a dream.*

8. *Was troubled.* Heb.—*Smitten*—beaten as with blows. Like his officers in the prison, he was disturbed by a dread of this mysterious foreboding. ¶ *All the magicians.* This was a class of wise men, "Magicians" professedly skilled by supernatural gifts, in resolving mysteries and secrets, and prying into the spirit-world. These are such as confronted Moses, and pretended to *do so with their enchantments* as he did in his miracles. They are called from a word signifying *pencil*, and meaning *scribes*, who were conversant

9 ¶ Then spake the chief butler unto Pharaoh, saying, I do remember my faults this day :

10 Pharaoh was ^d wroth with his servants, ^e and put me in ward in the captain of the guard's house, *both* me, and the chief baker ;

11 And ^f we dreamed a dream in one night, I and he : we dreamed each man according to the interpretation of his dream.

12 And *there was* there with us a young man, an Hebrew, ^g servant to the captain of the guard ; and we told him, and he ^h interpreted to us our dreams : to each man according to his dream he did interpret.

13 And it came to pass, ⁱ as he interpreted to us, so it was : me he restored unto mine office, and him he hanged.

14 ¶ ^k Then Pharaoh sent and called Joseph, and they ^l brought him hastily ^m out of the dungeon : and he shaved *himself*, and changed his raiment, and came in unto Pharaoh.

15 And Pharaoh said unto Joseph, I have dreamed a dream, and *there is* none that can interpret it : ⁿ and I have heard say of thee, *that* thou canst understand a dream to interpret it.

16 And Joseph answered Pharaoh, saying, ^o *It is* not in me : ^p God shall give Pharaoh an answer of peace.

^d ch. 40 : 2, 3. ^e ch. 39 : 20. ^f ch. 40 : 5. ^g ch. 37 : 36. ^h ch. 40 : 12, etc. ⁱ ch. 40 : 22. ^k Ps. 105 : 20. ^l Dan. 2 : 25. ^m 1 Sam. 2 : 8 ; Ps. 113 : 7, 8. ⁿ ver. 12 ; Ps. 25 : 14 ; Dan. 5 : 16. ^o Dan. 2 : 30 ; Acts 3 : 12 ; 2 Cor. 3 : 5. ^p ch. 40 : 8 ; Dan. 2 : 22, 28, 47, and 4 : 2.

with the sacred arts and sciences of Egypt, and the hieroglyphics, astrology, etc. They practised soothsaying, divination, etc., and were regarded as possessors of secret arts. (Ex. 7 : 11.) ¶ *The wise men.* These included all classes of this sort. These however could not interpret the dreams.

9-13. He now recites the circumstances in which he became acquainted with Joseph, and his wonderful success in interpreting dreams. It is not so much to do Joseph a favor that he commends him, as it is to raise himself in Pharaoh's esteem. ¶ *My faults*—leading to his imprisonment.

14. *Brought him hastily.* Heb.—*Caused him to run.* In haste to relieve Pharaoh, and possibly also out of interest in Joseph. It was customary in Egypt to shave the hair

of the head and beard except in times of mourning ; and he would change his prison raiment for such as would be furnished him to appear before the king.

15. *I have heard say of thee.* Heb.—*I have heard concerning thee, saying, thou wilt hear a dream to interpret it*—hast only need to hear it in order to interpret it.

16. *Not in me.* Heb.—*Without me.* (It is not in me.) *God will answer as to the welfare of Pharaoh.* Noble fidelity to the cause of God ! Ingenuous simplicity of character, not boasting himself, but referring the Divine gift of interpretation to God alone. So in ch. 40 : 8, he had pointed the state prisoners away from himself to God. The Sept. reads, " Not so—without God there shall not an answer of peace be given to Pharaoh."

17 And Pharaoh said unto Joseph, ^aIn my dream, behold, I stood upon the bank of the river:

18 And behold, there came up out of the river seven kine, fat-fleshed, and well-favored; and they fed in a meadow:

19 And behold, seven other kine came up after them, poor, and very ill-favored, and lean-fleshed, such as I never saw in all the land of Egypt for badness:

20 And the lean and the ill-favored kine did eat up the first seven fat kine:

21 And when they had eaten them up, it could not be known that they had eaten them; but they *were* still ill-favored, as at the beginning. So I awoke.

22 And I saw in my dream, and behold, seven ears came up in one stalk, full and good:

23 And behold, seven ears, withered, thin, *and* blasted with the east wind, sprung up after them:

24 And the thin ears devoured the seven good ears: and ^rI told *this* unto the magicians; but *there was* none that could declare *it* to me.

25 ¶ And Joseph said unto Pharaoh, The dream of Pharaoh is one: ^sGod hath shewed Pharaoh what he *is* about to do.

26 The seven good kine *are* seven years; and the seven good ears *are* seven years: the dream *is* one.

27 And the seven thin and ill-favored kine that came up after them *are* seven years; and the seven empty ears blasted with the east wind shall be ^tseven years of famine.

28 ^uThis *is* the thing which I have spoken unto Pharaoh: what God *is* about to do he sheweth unto Pharaoh.

29 Behold, there come ^xseven years of great plenty throughout all the land of Egypt:

30 And there shall ^yarise after them seven years of famine; and all the plenty shall be forgotten in the land of Egypt; and the famine ^zshall consume the land:

31 And the plenty shall not be known in the land by reason of that famine following: for it *shall be* very grievous.

q ver. 1. r ver. 8; Dan. 4: 7. s Dan. 2: 28, 29, 45; Rev. 4: 1. t 2 Kings 8: 1. u ver. 25. x ver. 47. y ver. 54. z ch. 47: 13.

19. Pharaoh describes the lean kine as most extraordinarily bad, beyond anything he had ever seen in Egypt. up, etc. Heb.—*And they had entered into the inside of them and it was not known*, etc.

21. He here adds that the appearance of these lean cows was not at all improved by their eating the fat ones. When they had eaten them

25. Heb.—*What (the) God is doing (about to do) he hath declared to Pharaoh.*

26. *The dream is one.* Though twofold in form, yet it is one in meaning.

32 And for that the dream was doubled unto Pharaoh twice; *it is* because the ^a thing *is* established by God, and God will shortly bring it to pass.

33 Now therefore let Pharaoh look out a man discreet and wise, and set him over the land of Egypt.

34 Let Pharaoh do *this*, and let him appoint officers over the land, and ^b take up the fifth part of the land of Egypt in the seven plenteous years.

35 And ^c let them gather all the food of those good years that come, and lay up corn under the hand of Pharaoh; and let them keep food in the cities.

36 And that food shall be for store to the land against the seven years of famine, which shall be in the land of Egypt; that the land ^d perish not through the famine.

37 ¶ And ^e the thing was good in the eyes of Pharaoh, and in the eyes of all his servants.

38 And Pharaoh said unto his servants, Can we find *such a one* as this *is*, a man ^f in whom the spirit of God *is*?

39 And Pharaoh said unto Joseph, Forasmuch as God hath shewed thee all this, *there is* none so discreet and wise as thou *art*:

40 ^g Thou shalt be over mine house, and according unto thy word shall all my people be ruled: only in the throne will I be greater than thou.

^a Num. 23: 19; Isa. 46: 10, 11. ^b Prov. 6: 6, 7, 8. ^c ver. 48. ^d ch. 47: 15, 19. ^e Ps. 105: 19; Acts 7: 10. ^f Num. 27: 18; Job. 32: 8; Prov. 2: 6; Dan. 4: 8, 18, and 5: 11, 14, and 6: 3. ^g Ps. 105: 21, 22; Acts 7: 10.

32. Heb.—*And concerning the doubling of the dream to Pharaoh twice.* So far as this is concerned it is to show the certainty of the dream and the speedy execution of it. This positive interpretation is in striking contrast with the utter ignorance of all Pharaoh's wise men.

33-36. Joseph now proceeds to give counsel to Pharaoh such as the occasion required. He advises Pharaoh to look out a man wise and prudent, to act as chief of this department of supplies—who should appoint overseers to take up (as a tax) the fifth part of the crop for the seven years of superabundance to be stored under the hand of Pharaoh as a national reserve for the years of famine. This was a public measure for the highest public good, that the

land *perish not through the famine.* The government of Egypt has in modern times taxed the crops seventy per cent., instead of one-fifth which would be twenty per cent. The number *five* seems to have been the sacred number of the Egyptians. They were accustomed to a tax of a *tenth* in ordinary years, for the public granaries. The extra crop would enable them easily to double the tax or rent.

37, 38. Pharaoh was pleased with the plan and so were all his servants. And naturally enough he fixed upon Joseph as the overseer or chief of this bureau of supplies—a *man in whom the spirit of God is*—the spirit (as Pharaoh saw) of supernatural knowledge and wisdom.

39, 40. *Forasmuch.* Heb.—*After*

41 And Pharaoh said unto Joseph, See, I have ^h set thee over all the land of Egypt.

42 And Pharaoh ⁱ took off his ring from his hand, and put it upon Joseph's hand, and ^k arrayed him in vestures of fine linen, ^l and put a gold chain about his neck;

43 And he made him to ride in the second chariot which he had: ^m and they cried before him, Bow the knee: and he made him ruler ⁿ over all the land of Egypt.

44 And Pharaoh said unto Joseph, I *am* Pharaoh, and without thee shall no man lift up his hand or foot in all the land of Egypt.

45 And Pharaoh called Joseph's name Zaphnath-paaneah; and he gave him to wife Asenath the daughter of Poti-pherah priest of On: and Joseph went out over *all* the land of Egypt.

h Dan. 6 : 3. i Esth. 3 : 10, and 8 : 2, 8. k Esth. 8 : 15. l Dan. 5 : 7, 29. m Esth. 6 : 9. n ch. 42 : 6, and 45 : 26; Acts 7 : 10.

God hath shewed thee all this, none is so discreet and wise (Joseph's terms) as thou. He answered his own description best in Pharaoh's view.

¶ *According to thy word, Heb.—thy mouth, (order, command,) shall my whole people dispose themselves.* Some take this term to mean *kiss*, (in reverence and submission,) but *Keil* and *Delitzsch* contend for the former translation, and this is also that of the Gr. and Lat. and Onk. *Upon thy mouth shall all my people kiss* is not Hebrew, nor can it be shown that it was the Egyptian usage. ¶ *Only in the throne.* Pharaoh, as emperor, would be his only superior.

41, 42. The appointment of Joseph as grand vizier is now completed, by giving him the signet ring of the monarch. ¶ *I have set.* Heb.—*I have given* thee. This was the seal which the prime minister wore to seal the royal edicts with the authority of the monarch. (Esth. 3 : 10.) ¶ *Fine linen*—fine fabric (rather of cotton or muslin—*Keil* and *Delitzsch*) worn by the priests, who were not allowed to enter a temple in a woollen garment. (Herod. 2 : 37, 81.) The gold chain was worn by persons of distinction, as the Egyptian monuments show. The

judge and the grand vizier wore it. So, also, in Persia and Babylonia. (Dan. 5 : 7.) Thus was Joseph invested and installed in his high office.

43. Joseph was appointed also to ride in the second state chariot—second only to the king, and the heralds cried before him, *Bow the knee!* The streets of Egyptian cities are so narrow that we found this to be the practice, to have an usher run before an ordinary carriage, and cry out to the people to get out of the way. Here the outcry was to bow down. Some render the word, "*Father of the king,*" others, *Bow the knee.* But it is rather an Egyptian word and not Hebrew, and means, Cast yourselves down—do homage, (*a-bor.—K.*) *Kalisch* reads it, "*Abrech,*" *Governor*; namely, *that he be placed over all the land of Egypt.*

44. *I am Pharaoh, and without thee shall no man lift up his hand or foot in all the land of Egypt.* He should have absolute control of the people, by authority of Pharaoh himself. Loyalty to Pharaoh should be expressed and tested by loyalty to Joseph.

45. He was yet further to have his elevation denoted by a new name, (ch. 17 : 5; Dan. 1 : 7,) which

46 ¶ And Joseph *was* thirty years old when he ° stood before Pharaoh king of Egypt: and Joseph went out from the presence of Pharaoh, and went throughout all the land of Egypt.

47 And in the seven plenteous years the earth brought forth by handfuls.

o 1 Sam. 16 : 21 ; 1 Kings 12 : 6, 8 ; Dan. 1 : 19.

would also serve to naturalize him and remove the Egyptian prejudices.

¶ *Zuph-nath-paaneah.* *Onk., Syr., Arab.,* etc, render this, *Revealer of secrets ; Delitzsch, Lepsius, etc., Support of life.* *Kalisch* reads, *Rescuer of the world.* Besides this, Joseph was to be allied to a family of the kingdom, one of the most noble and influential—that of the chief priest, (On being the royal city,) whose patronage and power was immense. The priests were the landed aristocracy, and attended and controlled the kings. ¶ *Potipherah* means *he who is of the sun.* The sun was worshipped, and there was a temple of the sun at On. This is the same city as Heliopolis. We visited the site, about five miles from Cairo, on the east of the Nile, and found there only a single obelisk, covered with hieroglyphics, and over sixty feet in height—the most ancient of all obelisks known, erected about B. C. 2300. How Joseph could marry an Egyptian woman is asked by some. But it was only the Canaanites who were positively prohibited to the Hebrews for marriage. Moses' case was similar, who married the daughter of Jethro, a priest of Midian. But this is no example for our time; and the New Testament warns against being unequally yoked together with unbelievers. (2 Cor. 6 : 14.) Yet Joseph's God was acknowledged. ¶ *On.* *Oein* means, in the Coptic, *light*, or light of the sun. It is called *Aven*, (Exod. 30 : 17,) and *Bethshemesh*, (Jer. 43 : 13.)

46. Joseph had passed thirteen years in Egypt, and, from being a lad of *seventeen* when he was sold thither he was now *thirty*. He had been at least three years in the prison. This age of thirty was the age for entering upon the priesthood, under the law, and for manly service. (Num. 4 : 3.) It was the age at which the New Testament Joseph entered upon his ministry. Joseph's active ministry now commenced. He went out on his work of gathering and storing supplies throughout the land.

47–49. *By handfuls. In full hands or bundles.*—*Keil and Delitzsch.* This was the superabundant yield, according to the prophetic visions. The Egyptians were accustomed to keep an account of the sheaves or bushels, but now they became weary of numbering them. ¶ *He gathered up all the food*, that is, the one fifth portion levied for public storage. He stored up the food thus collected on the fields in the public granaries, which were in the cities. Such store-houses for grain appear on the Egyptian monuments, with all the processes for storing the crop. A man is represented, (on a sculptured tomb at Elithya,) taking account of the number of bushels as they are measured by another, who is subordinate. He is called *Thutnope*, the registrar of bushels. The figure of others is shown taking the grain in sacks and carrying it to the store-houses. (See *Heng. Egypt*, and B. Moses, p. 34.)

48 And he gathered up all the food of the seven years which were in the land of Egypt, and laid up the food in the cities: the food of the field which *was* round about every city, laid he up in the same.

49 And Joseph gathered corn ^p as the sand of the sea, very much, until he left numbering; for *it was* without number.

50 ^q And unto Joseph were born two sons before the years of famine came: which Asenath the daughter of Poti-pherah priest of On bare unto him.

51 And Joseph called the name of the first-born Manasseh; for God, *said he*, hath made me forget all my toil and all my father's house.

52 And the name of the second called he Ephraim: for God hath caused me to be ^r fruitful in the land of my affliction.

53 ¶ And the seven years of plenteousness that was in the land of Egypt were ended.

54 ^s And the seven years of dearth began to come, ^t according as Joseph had said: and the dearth was in all lands; but in all the land of Egypt there was bread.

55 And when all the land of Egypt was famished, the people cried to Pharaoh for bread: and Pharaoh said unto all the Egyptians, Go unto Joseph; what he saith to you, do.

56 And the famine was over all the face of the earth: and Jo-

^p ch. 22: 17; Judges 7: 12; 1 Sam. 13: 5; Ps. 78: 27. ^q ch. 46: 20, and 48: 5. ^r ch. 49: 22. ^s Ps. 105: 16; Acts 7: 11. ^t ver. 30.

50, 51. Joseph had two sons born to him prior to the years of famine.

The first he called *Manasseh*, that is, *causing to forget*. This was a joy and a domestic happiness, which made him forget all his toil and all his father's house. This does not express any abatement of filial feeling, only a greater content in his painful absence from his father's house. This also explains the reason why he had not sent to his father a message of his condition. Besides the fact that he may have had no opportunity while he was a slave under Potiphar, he began to see himself as dealt with by God for great good, and therefore he could rest in his hope of the best results. Still more, he would have been obliged, in reporting of himself, to

report the treachery of his brethren towards him; and he rests all with his Covenant God.

52. *Ephraim*, meaning *double fruitfulness*. (Ch. 49: 22.) Joseph is a fruitful bough, etc. He still calls Egypt the land of his affliction, and longs for his home in Canaan. Ground in Egypt if well cultivated yields thirty-fold and more. God make us fruitful in the land of our affliction!

53, 54. Now came on the seven years of famine as Joseph had foretold through the dream of Pharaoh. ¶ *In all lands*—as of Palestine, Arabia, etc., adjacent to Egypt. But by Joseph's provident method of laying up supplies in time of plenty *there was bread* (food) in Egypt.

55, 56. The famine at length was

seph opened all the store-houses, and ^v sold unto the Egyptians; and the famine waxed sore in the land of Egypt.

57 ^x And all countries came into Egypt to Joseph for to buy *corn*; because that the famine was so sore in all lands.

CHAPTER XLII.

NOW when ^a Jacob saw that there was corn in Egypt, Jacob said unto his sons, Why do ye look one upon another?

^v ch. 42: 6, and 47: 14, 24. ^x Deut. 9: 28. ^a Acts 7: 12.

felt by the Egyptians themselves. They had not laid up their supplies as directed by Joseph, and so soon their store was exhausted and they came to Pharaoh with complaints and were referred by him to Joseph. *He opened all which in them* (was food) all the granaries. ¶ *Sold.* Heb. —*Broke*—thence (with ^ב) to *sell* and in Isa. 55: 1, rendered to *buy* (without the preposition.) Famines in Egypt were not very uncommon, for whenever the Nile does not well overflow, the famine is the result, and anciently this was more frequent than now. The famine became severe in Egypt, notwithstanding all the precautions taken by the government. The people were probably improvident. Yet Joseph had the public supplies in store and sold to the people. All experience shows the great wisdom of Joseph in proposing to *sell* at a low price wherever it was possible rather than to *give* to the people, that thus they might have the motive of exertion and maintain the dignity of at least a nominal purchase. This same policy was pursued by the British government in the Irish famine.

57. *All countries.* It may be meant to include the then known world, but it would refer chiefly to the countries adjacent to Egypt, likely to be affected by the same want of rain in the mountains as would

prevent the overflow of the Nile, which is flooded by rains in the high mountains of Abyssinia; and these proceed from clouds formed in the Mediterranean, and carried over all these countries by the winds so that they would be similarly affected by a drought. OBSERVE.—(1.) How God brings about great events in families and kingdoms by His control of natural laws, even in the rains and crops. (2.) God is not confined to the Promised Land, but meets His people elsewhere. (See Acts 7.) (3.) Our blessings often grow out of our afflictions, as our afflictions also often grow out of our blessings.

CHAPTER XLII.

§ 65. JOSEPH'S BRETHREN ARRESTED IN EGYPT AS SPIES. SIMEON HELD FOR BENJAMIN.

It had been long ago predicted that the covenant people should be afflicted in a strange land four hundred years, and God has His providential methods to bring about His decrees by natural means. This universal famine following Joseph's sale into Egypt was to drive the family of Jacob thither where they were to increase to a nation in the midst of afflictions and oppressions, and be trained for entrance to the promised land. Thus the history proceeds,

2 And he said, Behold I have heard that there is corn in Egypt: get you down thither, and buy for us from thence; that we may ^b live and not die.

3 ¶ And Joseph's ten brethren went down to buy corn in Egypt.

4 But Benjamin, Joseph's brother, Jacob sent not with his brethren: for he said, ^c Lest peradventure mischief befall him.

5 And the sons of Israel came to buy *corn* among those that came: for the famine was ^d in the land of Canaan.

6 And Joseph *was* the governor ^e over the land, *and he it was* that sold to all the people of the land: and Joseph's brethren came, and ^f bowed down themselves before him *with* their faces to the earth.

b ch. 43: 8; Ps. 118: 17; Isa 38: 1. c ver. 38. d Acts 7: 11. e ch. 41: 41. f ch. 37: 7.

while Joseph is to have his dreams of exaltation in the household fully realized. The famine had now reached Canaan.

1,2. Though the famine prevailed in Egypt, Joseph had the government store-houses supplied. ¶ *Corn in Egypt*. This is the fact which became known to Jacob, and which is the pivot on which the history turned. The term means here corn-market. How Jacob heard this fact from Egypt is not known. But there were reasons, as we shall plainly see, why Joseph's hour had not yet come for revealing himself, as the great deliverer and savior of the chosen people. Here, also, we are reminded of our New Testament Joseph. (John 2.) Joseph had now been seven or eight years in power. ¶ *Why do ye look?* Theirs was the very expression of distress and perplexity. Jacob propounds the only plan upon which they could hope to escape starvation—to go down to Egypt and buy corn. This distress grows also out of their conscience about Joseph. The road to Egypt and Egypt itself are haunted to them, on account of their selling of Joseph.

3, 4. The family is spoken of in their relation to Joseph, not as Jacob's ten sons, but as Joseph's ten

brethren. He is the hero of the narrative. ¶ *Benjamin was Joseph's brother* in a special sense, as born of the same mother, and beloved by the father in Joseph's stead, so that he could not bear to part with him for fear the like calamity might fall upon him as befell Joseph. How little does Jacob know what is truly good or evil in Providence!

5. The brothers are now called *the sons of Israel*, as the covenant name. ¶ *Among those that came—in the midst of the comers*—among those flocking thither for a like purpose from all quarters.

6. Joseph as *governor* (Heb.—*The Shalit—Sultan*) regulated the sales of corn in all the cities—and *he it was that sold*, not in person, but as having all the business superintended by him and referred to his decision; especially all the foreign business, and supplies of caravans from adjoining countries. The brethren of Joseph at length arrive to purchase corn for the starving family. *They bowed down themselves before him*, etc. This fulfils most literally the dream of Joseph, which up to this time had seemed so impossible to human view. Joseph had doubtless rested in the confidence of this result as thus revealed to him, and

7 And Joseph saw his brethren, and he knew them, but made himself strange unto them, and spake roughly unto them; and he said unto them, Whence come ye? And they said, From the land of Canaan to buy food.

8 And Joseph knew his brethren, but they knew not him.

9 And Joseph ^g remembered the dreams which he dreamed of them, and said unto them, Ye *are* spies; to see the nakedness of the land ye are come.

g ch. 37: 5, 9.

had felt it his duty to wait patiently upon God through his long years of trial.

7. Joseph knew his brethren but they did not know him. He had altered the most, of course. His position, his costume, and their remembrance of his lot in slavery, where they had left him, would amply account for their ignorance of him. *He made himself strange*—acted the part of a foreigner. He was thoroughly Egyptianized of course. ¶ *Spake roughly.* Heb.—*Spake with them hard things.* This roughness of Joseph is accompanied with so much true fraternal tenderness of feeling that we must seek a clue to this in Joseph's covenant relations. He to whom the dreams were given as to his coming superiority over his brethren was doubtless divinely directed as to the course to be pursued, as he had been all along hitherto. As a mode by which judgment should now be visited upon them for their sins, "he is to act the part of judge and avenger."—*Kalisch.* He holds in his hand the rod of justice and he is compelled to lift it against them. He would moreover have every personal reason for treating them shyly, and to make them smart under a sense of their evil doings. This would be necessary to make them appreciate his gracious provisions. This is the aspect in which Joseph reminds us of our New Testament Joseph. He will lay down the law

in order to make His gospel to be glad tidings.

9. Doubtless he understands the Divine intent in bringing these brethren. ¶ *Joseph remembered the dreams,* and he knew that his revealed superiority was now to be realized as the well beloved son. He could fairly challenge them with that evil heart which had so displayed itself in his case, and which is *deceitful* above all things and desperately wicked. ¶ *Ye are spies.* If this was not their present object, it was nothing too treacherous for them, and he would probe their inmost souls with this accusation of deceit. They who would deal so falsely by him would betray the kingdom. And he was acting as ruler to unveil to themselves their own iniquity. He therefore confronts them with what might fairly be suspected from their number and from their country, as on that side (north-east) Egypt was most exposed. Instead of being regarded as an intentional falsity on Joseph's part, it was only a fair method in his case, as a ruler, to put them (transgressors as they were) upon their vindication. Besides, this is the Oriental method of challenging a stranger. In truth it is the very idea of the European passport system, which puts every traveller under so much suspicion of mischievous intent as to put him constantly upon the proof of an honest and good object in his visit.

10 And they said unto him, Nay, my lord, but to buy food are thy servants come.

11 We *are* all one man's sons, we *are* true *men*; thy servants are no spies.

12 And he said unto them, Nay, but to see the nakedness of the land ye are come.

13 And they said, Thy servants *are* twelve brethren, the sons of one man in the land of Canaan: and behold, the youngest *is* this day with our father, and one ^h *is* not.

14 And Joseph said unto them, That *is it* that I spake unto you, saying, Ye are spies:

15 Hereby ye shall be proved: 'By the life of Pharaoh ye shall not go forth hence, except your youngest brother come hither.

16 Send one of you; and let him fetch your brother, and ye shall

h ch. 37: 30, and 44: 20; Lam. 5: 7. i 1 Sam. 1: 26, and 17: 55

10-12. They protest that they have no such sinister design, and, as to the suspicion from their number, they declare that they belong to the same father and are *true* (honest), and *no spies*. Joseph repeats his challenge so as to draw them out more fully; and though this might seem harsh in him as a man, it was just in him as a ruler. Finally, how could he know that these wicked brothers had not some evil design upon the store-houses to plunder them,—coming as they did in a body?

13. *And they said, Twelve are thy servants, brothers are we, sons of a man in the land of Canaan.* They mean to say that their errand is one to relieve family wants, not to carry out mischievous plots. ¶ *And behold the youngest is now with our father, and the one is no more.* How often they have shuddered to think of this last item in their family history—that lost brother—the slave long ago sold by them to a band of strangers; and yet they refer to it as though they had not truly repented.

14. Joseph insists upon his charge. He means to put them to the proof

of all that they say of themselves, and this was right and just in all the circumstances.

15. *By the life of Pharaoh.* Joseph here speaks as an Egyptian officer, and uses the form of solemn protestation which was common in the Egyptian court. He now demands the presence of the youngest brother, Benjamin. He means to test their feelings toward this one, who was the father's favorite in his stead, and his own mother's son. He would thus also have their thoughts turn back to their joint iniquity against himself. Joseph had an object also in thus bringing Benjamin to his presence that he might see him, and in keeping his brothers near him. He speaks however as the governor, having absolute control, that thus he may bring them to a proper abasement before him for their sins. In all this he doubtless acted under Divine direction. As he had all along been inspired to speak and act in the preliminaries, he will not surely be left to his own wisdom and counsel at this very crisis of the matter, and when the revelation of his dreams is to be fulfilled.

be kept in prison, that your words may be proved, whether *there be any* truth in you : or else, by the life of Pharaoh, surely ye *are* spies.

17 And he put them all together into ward three days.

18 And Joseph said unto them the third day, This do and live :
^k *for* I fear God :

19 If ye *be* true *men*, let one of your brethren be bound in the house of your prison : go ye, carry corn for the famine of your houses :

20 But ^lbring your youngest brother unto me ; so shall your words be verified, and ye shall not die. And they did so.

21 ¶ And they said one to another, ^m *We are* verily guilty concerning our brother, in that we saw the anguish of his soul, when he besought us, and we would not hear ; ⁿ therefore is this distress come upon us.

22 And Reuben answered them, saying, ^o Spake I not unto you,

^k Lev. 25 : 43 ; Neh. 5 : 15. ^l ver. 34 ; ch. 43 : 5, and 44 : 23. ^m Job 36 : 8, 9 : Hos. 5 : 15.
ⁿ Prov. 21 : 13 ; Matt. 7 : 2. ^o ch. 37 : 21.

This plan was to the brothers worse than imprisonment.

18, 19. Their imprisonment for three days would give them full opportunity to repent and talk over the matter. After this Joseph is ready to modify his proposal, and here he discloses to them the fact that he *fears God*. He will give them leave to go and carry food to the suffering household, if but one of them be left in prison bound as a hostage and security for their return with Benjamin. This he proposes simply as a test of their statements, and as a proof of their honest purpose. To this proposal they agreed. How must this mention of God's name sharpen their convictions of their great sin ! How admirable a thing it is when a judge fears God !

21. They saw their terrible extremity, and they begin to reflect upon it as a Divine visitation for their sin against the lost Joseph. ¶ *We are verily guilty, or we are held guilty*—brought to punishment. The working of all Joseph's treatment of

them, as of their treatment of him, had been towards this result,—to abase them before him with shame and sorrow for their atrocious treachery and crime. Now, they say, This is what we get for selling Joseph—and indeed this is the desired effect. Here again we are reminded of our New Testament Joseph, who sometimes seems to hide himself to us behind the law and behind our sins, but only to make the mutual recognition more blessed. All this stirring up of their circle of brotherhood, makes the conscience of Joseph's betrayal and sale more sharp. And so Jesus will have us remember with grief and self-reproach how we have betrayed Him and abused His love. But all this should be only in order to the more earnest embrace of that love. God often brings our sins to mind by His sharp afflictions. We are driven to inquire wherefore He has a controversy with us.

22. Reuben cannot forbear to chide them with their cruelty against his expostulation ; and he presses

saying, Do not sin against the child; and ye would not hear? therefore behold also his blood is ^p required.

23 And they knew not that Joseph understood *them*; for he spake unto them by an interpreter.

24 And he turned himself about from them, and wept; and returned to them again, and communed with them, and took from them Simeon, and bound him before their eyes.

25 ¶ Then Joseph commanded to fill their sacks with corn, and to restore every man's money into his sack, and to give them provision for the way: and ^q thus did he unto them.

26 And they laded their asses with the corn, and departed thence.

p ch. 9: 5; 1 Kings 2: 32; 2 Chron. 24: 22; Ps. 9: 12; Luke 11: 50, 51. q Matt. 5: 44; Rom. 12: 17, 20, 21.

home the conviction that all this trouble is a Divine retribution for the blood of Joseph. He speaks as if Joseph might be counted as dead. No wonder. They had heard nothing of him these long years, and they had reason to infer that he had perished.

23. Thus they opened their minds to one another in the hearing of Joseph. They could not suppose that Joseph would understand a word of their conversation, for he had conversed with them through an *interpreter*. Lit.—*The interpreter*—of the court. This court interpreter was an official through whom the prime-minister was wont to speak, and not necessarily interpreting a foreign tongue. He was one who stood between them.

24. Joseph could not repress his emotion. *He turned away and wept*. Then he returned to them and continued the conversation, which was followed by his taking Simeon from them, and binding him before their eyes. There was a reason for selecting Simeon, which would naturally occur to them as the leader of their cruelty in the plunder and carnage of Shechem (34: 25), and probably enough, in the case of Jo-

seph. This would be calculated to bring up to their memories a lively recollection of past misdoings. “A speaking act.”—*Murphy*. So it is that our Joseph passes through the world already in judgment with his fan in his hand thoroughly purging his floor.

25. *To restore*, etc. Joseph now, with generous kindness towards the family, orders the purchase-money to be returned to them in this private manner. He will not take their money for the corn. And he will not return it openly, since this would require explanation which he was not ready to give. The presumption is that Joseph returned the money from his own funds, or obtained the special permission of the king, or that he had a discretionary power to give the corn where he thought it not proper to require the money. ¶ *And thus was done unto them*. Perhaps he means also to use this expedient to bring them to repentance. All this reminds us of the wonderful methods of God's providence for the same ends. And we cannot help regarding all this as done by Divine direction.

26. *And (Heb.) they lifted their purchased corn upon their asses*, etc.

27 And as ^r one of them opened his sack to give his ass provender in the inn, he espied his money: for behold, it *was* in his sack's mouth.

28 And he said unto his brethren, My money is restored; and lo, *it is* even in my sack; and their heart failed *them*, and they were afraid, saying one to another, What *is* this *that* God hath done unto us?

29 ¶ And they came unto Jacob their father unto the land of Canaan, and told him all that befell unto them, saying,

30 The man *who is* the lord of the land ^s spake roughly to us, and took us for spies of the country.

31 And we said unto him, we *are* true *men*; we are no spies:

32 We *be* twelve brethren, sons of our father: one *is* not, and the youngest *is* this day with our father in the land of Canaan.

33 And the man, the lord of the country, said unto us, ^t Hereby shall I know that ye *are* true *men*: leave one of your brethren *here* with me, and take *food for* the famine of your households, and be gone:

34 And bring your youngest brother unto me: then shall I know that ye *are* no spies, but *that* ye *are* true *men*: so will I deliver you your brother, and ye shall ^v traffic in the land.

35 ¶ And it came to pass as they emptied their sacks, that behold, ^x every man's bundle of money *was* in his sack; and when *both* they and their father saw the bundles of money, they were afraid.

r ch. 43: 21. s ver. 7. t ver. 15, 19, 20. v ch. 34: 10. x ch. 43: 21.

27. *In the inn.* A camping place for the night rather than a caravanserai. The term is from a verb meaning to *lodge*, and has the local prefix. These halting-grounds are well understood by travellers, and are fixed according to the distance and the convenience of water for man and beast.

28. This discovery of the money by one of them alarmed them, because of their evil conscience. "The wicked flee when no man pursueth." They regard it as a Divine infliction. Providence, they say, is plainly against them to involve them in new difficulties at every turn. Afterward they find that the rest also have their money in their sacks. (vs. 35.)

29-34. They arrive at home and

narrate to their venerable father what had occurred, and begin to explain Simeon's detention. ¶ *Ye shall traffic*, etc. This clause is added to what appears in the history. They were to be admitted to commercial privileges in case they should prove themselves true and honest men.

35. *As they emptied.* Only one had discovered his money till now. They would be several days on the road (five or six), and, if the rest had opened their sacks on the way, it was only one of them which had the money in the sack's mouth, (27.) The rest discovered theirs only when emptying their sacks. They seem to withhold the fact of their previous discovery in one case.

36 And Jacob their father said unto them, Me have ye ^y bereaved of *my children*: Joseph is not, and Simeon is not, and ye will take Benjamin *away*: all these things are against me.

37 And Reuben spake unto his father, saying, Slay my two sons, if I bring him not to thee: deliver him into mine hand, and I will bring him to thee again.

38 And he said, My son shall not go down with you; for ^a his brother is dead, and he is left alone; ^b if mischief befall him by the way in the which ye go, then shall ye ^c bring down my gray hairs with sorrow to the grave.

CHAPTER XLIII.

AND the famine was ^a sore in the land.

2 And it came to pass, when they had eaten up the corn which they had brought out of Egypt, their father said unto them, Go again, buy us a little food.

y ch. 43: 14. a ver. 13, and ch. 37: 33, and 44: 28. b ver. 4, and ch. 44: 29. c ch. 37: 35, and 44: 31. a ch. 41: 54, 57.

36. Poor Jacob! "*Ye are making me childless. Joseph is gone, and Simeon is gone; and will ye take Benjamin? All this falls upon me.*" —Keil and Delitzsch. Rather, *Me ye have utterly bereaved. Joseph is not, and Simeon is not, and ye will take Benjamin. All of these (things) are against me.* How little does Jacob in this extremity see how a faithful God is ordering all these things for his salvation!

37. Reuben, the first-born, now comes forward, offering to give up his two sons to be kept as hostages for Benjamin, and to be slain if Benjamin be not brought back. Full well did Reuben know that, in the possible event of their not returning Benjamin, the aged grandfather would find little satisfaction in slaying these lads thus left as guarantees. But it was the farthest that a father could go in satisfying a father's anxiety and doubt.

38. Jacob firmly refused. He looked upon Benjamin as his only son left after Joseph. So the chil-

dren of Rachel had possession of his heart; and Benjamin is now his all—his idol, worshipped as if in the stead of God. If, as might so easily be, mischief should befall his darling by the way, then he sees nothing but sorrow and the grave before him for his gray-haired old age. And this result he charges upon their proposal. How often, when we think that everything is against us, everything is really for us and working together for our good. God strikes our idols.

Painful as it is, this last, bitterest stroke of parting with Benjamin must be endured for the happy issue.

The darkest hour is just before the day.

In the mount Jehovah shall be seen, as it was with Abraham. But Jacob had not the faith that so freely gave up Isaac. He looked at the human agents, and overlooked the Divine Agent in it all. If God be for us, who can be against us? God brings His chosen people through sorrow to joy and through labor to rest.

3 And Judah spake unto him, saying, The man did solemnly protest unto us, saying, Ye shall not see my face, except your ^b brother *be* with you.

4 If thou wilt send our brother with us, we will go down and buy thee food:

5 But if thou wilt not send *him* we will not go down: for the man said unto us, Ye shall not see my face, except your brother *be* with you.

6 And Israel said, Wherefore dealt ye so ill with me, *as* to tell the man whether ye had yet a brother?

7 And they said, The man asked us straitly of our state, and of our kindred, saying, *Is* your father yet alive, have ye *another* brother? and we told him according to the tenor of these words: Could we certainly know that he would say, Bring your brother down?

b ch. 42: 20, and 44: 23.

CHAPTER XLIII.

§ 66. BENJAMIN SENT. RECEPTION BY JOSEPH.

1, 2. The famine in Canaan continues, and the pressure is felt more and more. "It is not reasonable to suppose that nine men with nine sacks could convey corn enough to last the large family of Jacob long." —*Rosen*. Indeed the twelve households had to be supplied, and the store they had brought was now running out —began to fail. (See John 2: 3.) The famine was chiefly in corn, while other products of the soil were had in some measure; (as grapes, nuts, olives, almonds, figs, vs. 11;) yet the staff of life was lacking. ¶ *Go again*. Heb.—*Return*. ¶ *A little food*. Little in proportion to their need was all they could buy or bring.

3. Judah here presents to the aged and anxious father the difficulty in the case—the sole condition upon which they could hope to gain anything by going back to Egypt. Some months had now elapsed, and Simeon was still held as a hostage, and the father could not avoid anxiety for

his return. And now he is balancing between food and Simeon to be had in Egypt, and his darling Benjamin to be parted with for that errand.

4, 5. Judah undertakes to say that if he will allow them to take Benjamin with them, so as to meet this condition of Egypt's lord, they would go down and buy food; but not otherwise, since it would be a vain errand.

6, 7. *Wherefore dealt ye*, etc. Heb. —*Wherefore have ye done evil to me to tell the man*, etc. The distressed heart of Jacob must relieve itself by these reflections upon the indiscretion of his sons in revealing this fact of their having a younger brother at home. But they vindicate themselves by insisting that they frankly replied thus to his particular questioning, without any suspicion that he would require them to bring him there. ¶ *Asked us straitly*. Earnestly inquired about us and about our kindred. The narrative foregoing does not mention these inquiries, only that they were constrained by his charge against them (of being spies) to enter into full particulars. These very questions, it would seem, were put to them. ¶ *According*. Heb.—*Upon*

8 And Judah said unto Israel his father, Send the lad with me, and we will arise and go; that we may live and not die, both we, and thou, *and* also our little ones.

9 I will be surety for him; of mine hand shalt thou require him; ^cif I bring him not unto thee, and set him before thee, then let me bear the blame for ever:

10 For except we had lingered, surely now we had returned this second time.

11 And their father Israel said unto them, If it *must be* so now, do this: take of the best fruits in the land in your vessels, and ^dcarry down the man a present, a little ^ebalm, and a little honey, spices, and myrrh, nuts, and almonds:

12 And take double money in your hand; and the money ^fthat was brought again in the mouth of your sacks, carry *it* again in your hand; peradventure it *was* an oversight:

13 Take also your brother, and arise, go again unto the man:

^c ch. 44 : 32; Philem. 18 : 19. ^d ch. 32 : 20; Prov. 18 : 16. ^e ch. 37 : 25; Jer. 8 : 22. ^f ch. 42 : 25, 35.

the mouth of (in conformity with) *these words* (his questions.) They were as much surprised as the father could have been at this unexpected demand for Benjamin. They should not therefore be blamed. The answer is in good temper and fully justifies their speech.

8-11. Judah now urges compliance with the hard condition; and when Jacob thinks of the sad alternative—the starvation of all the household—he is constrained to yield. Judah offers to guarantee Benjamin's safe return. He will take all the risk and all the blame in case of failure. (1 Kings 1 : 21.) This is to assure Jacob that there shall be no failure, if human energy and fidelity can accomplish the safe return of Benjamin. ¶ *Except.* Judah further reminds Jacob that, but for this hesitancy and delay, the journey would already have been accomplished, and they would have been safely at home. This practical, business-like appeal prevails with Jacob. Pity to delay, when he must yield at last. ¶ *Take.* He acts with the same prudence as in case of

meeting Esau. He will conciliate the prime-minister of Egypt with presents. ¶ *Best fruits.* Heb.—*The song of the land*—that which is most praised of its productions. These are the same (excepting in two cases) with the articles conveyed to Egypt by the Ishmaelites. (Ch. 37 : 25.) These are articles that grow best in a drought.

12. *Double money.* Heb.—*Money of second*, that is, more money,—not double the amount,—but, of course, money for a second purchase, whether more or less than before. ¶ *And the money that was returned in the mouth of your sacks return it again in your hand.* Perhaps it (was) a mistake, namely, that it was in your bags by some mistake or oversight.

13, 14. *Take also your brother.* This was the bitter trial, hardest of all for Jacob to say. He refers the case now to the Covenant God. The weakness of his faith appears in his trusting the case to God only when he could hold out no longer; and it is an equivocal trust, that savors more of despair. ¶ *If I be bereaved,*

14 And God Almighty give you mercy before the man, that he may send away your other brother, and Benjamin: ^s If I be bereaved of *my children*, I am bereaved.

15 ¶ And the men took that present, and they took double money in their hand, and Benjamin; and rose up, and went down to Egypt, and stood before Joseph.

16 And when Joseph saw Benjamin with them, he said to the ^h ruler of his house, Bring *these* men home, and slay, and make ready: for *these* men shall dine with me at noon.

17 And the man did as Joseph bade: and the man brought the men into Joseph's house.

18 And the men were afraid because they were brought into Joseph's house; and they said, Because of the money that was returned in our sacks at the first time, are we brought in; that he may seek occasion against us, and fall upon us, and take us for bondmen, and our asses.

g Esther 4 : 16. h ch. 24 : 2, and 39 : 4, and 44 : 1.

etc. Heb.—*And I, according as I am bereaved, I am bereaved.* (Esth. 4 : 16.) If it must be so, then be it so. So he gives up. Could he not confide rather in Him who had saved him from the wrath of Esau, that He would deliver Simeon and Benjamin? It is too much in the desponding spirit of his former complaint. (Ch. 42 : 36.) He looked too much at the secular, human side of the matter, and too little at the spiritual and divine side. When we are in the dark, why should we not rather expect deliverance than yield to despondence? Why not look on the bright side—the sunny side—where the Sun of Righteousness shines? Where is our faith, and where is our Christian hope? “Though He slay me, yet will I trust in him.” “What time I am afraid, I will trust in Thee.” Or, is this indeed the temper of Jacob's mind, and are we to regard this rather as the language of resignation and submission to the will of God? So *Candlish, Keil*, etc.

15. The brothers set out according to the plan of Jacob with present in hand, and arrived in Egypt, and

came into the presence of Joseph, probably at the public office.

16. The sight of Benjamin moved Joseph. His object had been accomplished of bringing him thither, after all the delay. He was now relieved of the fears which had beset him lest Benjamin also had been persecuted by his brethren for being the favorite of his father. He immediately handed them over to the charge of his steward (*the ruler of his house*, ch. 39 : 5), with orders to take them into his house, and prepare a dinner for them and for him. ¶ *Slay.* Flesh was used among the Orientals only on very special occasions and as a holiday meal. This would serve to indicate Joseph's kind reception of them. “As is the custom in Egypt and other hot climates, they cooked the meat as soon as killed, with the same view of having it tender which makes northern people keep it until decomposition is beginning.” (*Wilkinson*, p. 174.)

17, 18. Their guilty conscience is constantly accusing them, and turning even their generous reception into a source of alarm. This is the

19 And they came near to the steward of Joseph's house, and they communed with him at the door of the house,

20 And said, O sir, ⁱwe came indeed down at the first time to buy food:

21 And ^kit came to pass, when we came to the inn, that we opened our sacks, and behold, *every* man's money *was* in the mouth of his sack, our money in full weight: and we have brought it again in our hand.

22 And other money have we brought down in our hands to buy food: we cannot tell who put our money in our sacks.

i ch. 42 : 3, 10. k ch. 42 : 27, 35.

misery of sin. Conscience makes cowards of them. They thought of the mysterious finding of the purchase-money in their sacks, and feared that now they were to be arraigned and held in bondage on this account, and that all this strange hospitality must be only a blind for entrapping them, and securing their imprisonment. And yet the Orientals were wont to express their friendship and good faith by eating a meal with another. How then can they interpret this mystery? ¶ *Seek occasion against us.* Heb.—*Roll himself upon us*,—a common Oriental phrase, similar to the next clause, which is more familiar in other languages. We speak of *turning upon* a foe, and *coming down upon him*, and *falling upon him*.

19. *The steward*, the same person spoken of as ruler or manager of the house (vs. 18), a chief confidential servant. This officer, who had his orders for their entertainment, they *communied with*, talked confidentially with him *at the door* of the house. The Egyptian house, especially of the better sort, is in the Oriental style, built around an open square. The door is the single opening in the wall upon the street, which opens into the vestibule, and thence into the open court. They were too troubled to enter the house without un-

burdening their anxiety and explaining the mysterious money matter.

20, 21. *And said*, etc. Heb.—*And they said, we pray, O Lord, we (descended) came down*, etc. They refer to the first finding of the money at the halting-place, which discovery was completed at home. ¶ *In full weight.* The full amount, as money was *weighed* at that time. Heb.—*According to our silver in its weight*—the full amount which we had paid in the purchase.

22. *Other money* spoken of before (vs. 12) as *silver of repetition*. ¶ *We cannot tell.* This was to relieve themselves of any suspected complicity in the strange transaction. They felt that it was such a thing as required explanation. And all they knew about it was that they had nothing whatever to do with it, and no knowledge of the way in which the money came there. Often circumstances may be such as to throw grave suspicion upon good men. On this account, it is of the utmost importance to have a well-established character, which shall be above suspicion so far as possible, and which shall avail for a man's defence when unjust suspicion has fixed upon him. Here also appears the disadvantage of a bad character, that such an one is suspected of wrong doing even when he is not guilty. Besides, these

23 And he said, Peace *be* to you, fear not: your God, and the God of your father, hath given you treasure in your sacks: I had your money. And he brought Simeon out unto them.

24 And the man brought the men unto Joseph's house, and ¹ gave *them* water, and they washed their feet; and he gave their asses provender.

25 And they made ready the present against Joseph came at noon: for they heard that they should eat bread there.

26 ¶ And when Joseph came home, they brought him the present which *was* in their hand into the house, and ^m bowed themselves to him to the earth.

1 ch. 18 : 4, and 24 : 32. m ch 37 : 7, 10.

men feel that they have a bad record with their own conscience, and "a guilty conscience needs no accuser." Trust in God is the chief confidence in such a dark hour. (Ps. 37.)

23. The reply of the steward was unexpectedly encouraging and assuring to the distressed brothers. They were innocent of this, but guilty of another and greater crime. The wicked man exposes himself to charges and suspicions even when he is innocent, simply because he has lost the confidence of those who know of his misdoings. ¶ *Peace be to you.* The Oriental salutation of friendship. ¶ *Fear not.* This was doubly assuring. ¶ *Your God and the God of your fathers.* How perfectly comforting that this officer of Egypt's dreaded lord acknowledges the God of the Hebrews, and recognizes Him as the God of these brothers and of their fathers. What a rebuke to their lack of faith. Why should they have been so slow to see His hand in thus supplying them with corn without money and without price? Here again is our New Testament Joseph, who will have no pay for what He has to give, but gives it all freely and of grace, and on no other terms, to whosoever will. ¶ *I had your money.* This is the steward's ac-

knowledgment that he had received payment in full for the corn, and that no charge could be brought against them.

24, 25. Every mark of hospitality is shown to them, and Simeon is brought out. Now they could enter the house of Egypt's lord with good cheer. Their consciences are relieved. They seek only now to appear before him in a becoming manner, and present their gift of gratitude and praise. ¶ *For they heard that they should eat bread there.* Joseph would be at home at the dining hour of noon, from his public and official duties, and they will be prepared to meet him with a gift especially because of the *glad tidings* that they were to *eat bread* there. Jesus has spread a table for us, and anointed our heads with generous oil, and made our cup run over, and chiefly, He has spread His own sacramental table, and will sup with us and we with Him. Well may we bring presents. He will take as purchase-money for His provisions of grace no pay for the Bread of Life. But He will receive our grateful offerings of praise, and with such sacrifices God is well pleased.

26-28. Now along with the family, and present in hand, these brethren of Joseph bow themselves to him.

27 And he asked them of *their* welfare, and said, *Is* your father well, the old man ⁿ of whom ye spake? *Is* he yet alive?

28 And they answered, Thy servant our father *is* in good health, he *is* yet alive: ^o and they bowed down their heads and made obeisance.

29 And he lifted up his eyes, and saw his brother Benjamin, ^p his mother's son, and said, *Is* this your younger brother, ^a of whom ye spake unto me? And he said, God be gracious unto thee, my son.

30 And Joseph made haste: for ^r his bowels did yearn upon his brother: and he sought *where* to weep; and he entered into *his* chamber, and ^s wept there.

31 And he washed his face, and went out, and refrained himself, and said, Set on ^t bread.

32 And they set on for himself, and for them by themselves, and for the Egyptians which did eat with him, by themselves; because the Egyptians might not eat bread with the Hebrews; for that *is* ^u an abomination unto the Egyptians.

n ch. 42 : 11, 13. o ch. 37 : 7, 10. p ch. 35 : 17, 18. q ch. 42 : 13. r 1 Kings 3 : 26. s ch. 42 : 24. t ver. 25. u ch. 46 : 34; Exod. 8 : 26.

His dream is verified. The sun, moon, and eleven stars pay him obeisance. ¶ *And he asked.* (Heb.)—*He asked of them of peace, or welfare.* ¶ *Is your father well?* Heb.—*Whether is peace to your father?* Heb.—*And they answered peace (or well-being) to thy servant our father—he yet lives.*

29. He asks if this is Benjamin, and without awaiting their answer adds, *God be gracious to thee, my son.* Benjamin was only about a year old when Joseph was sold, as he was sixteen years the younger.

30. *And Joseph made haste—hastened away.* He hurried aside smitten with overwhelming emotion. *His bowels did yearn.* Heb.—*Were kindled upon his brother.* (Hos. 11 : 8.) *Kalisch.* *His love was warmed for his brother.* He is in danger of betraying his fraternal feeling and thus prematurely revealing himself as their brother. He retires hurriedly to his chamber. How all the most tender memories of home and of his

fond mother and aged father rushed upon him like a flood, at the sight of Benjamin, and the affecting history of his own separation from home, and of the conspiracy of the brothers against him, and the very fulfilment of his dream to the letter, now in this strange manner proving God's covenant faithfulness to him,—all this was more than he was able to contain. He must relieve himself in tears.

31. *Set on bread.* That is, bring on the meal. *Bread* is the term for food in general.

32. Separate tables were provided for him and for them, and for his Egyptian attendants. Joseph eats by himself with regard to his high rank, and as required by Egyptian custom. The table was much the same as at the present day,—a small stool supporting a round tray on which the dishes were placed; but it differed from this in having its circular summit fixed on a pillar or leg, which was often in the form of a

33 And they sat before him, the first-born according to his birth-right, and the youngest according to his youth : and the men marvelled one at another.

34 And he took *and sent* messes unto them from before him : but Benjamin's mess was ^x five times so much as any of theirs. And they drank, and were merry with him.

x ch. 45 : 22.

man, generally a captive, who supported the slab on his head, the whole being of stone or of some hard wood. One or two guests generally sat at table, though from the mention of persons seated in rows according to rank it has been supposed that the tables were occasionally of a long shape, as may have been the case in this instance. "But even if round, they might still sit according to rank ; one place being always the post of honor, even at the present day at the round table of Egypt." (*Wilkinson*, p. 179.) "The guests sat on the ground or on stools and chairs, and having neither knives nor forks nor any substitute for them, like the chopsticks of the Chinese, they ate with their fingers and with the right hand like the modern Asiatics." (*Wilkinson*, p. 181.) The law of caste separated different ranks of Egyptians to different tables. And Herodotus mentions the unwillingness of the Egyptians to have any familiar intercourse with foreigners. (2 : 41.) The Egyptians were prevented from eating with the Hebrews because the latter slew and ate animals which the former regarded as sacred—the cow, the ox, etc. ; so that the Egyptians would not even use the cooking utensils of a Greek. The cow was regarded as the symbol of nature's fertility, and was sacred to Isis. Besides, the Hebrews did not practise the same religious ceremonies at meals as the Egyptians. It is also said, (ch. 46 : 34,) that "every shepherd is an abomination to the Egypt-

tians." "They considered all foreigners unclean." (*Rawlinson*.)

33. *They sat before him.* "In their mode of sitting on chairs they resembled the modern European rather than the Asiatics, neither using soft divans nor sitting cross-legged on carpets. Nor did they recline at meals as the Romans on a *triclinium*." (*Wilkinson*.) They were here ranged exactly in accordance with their ages, and no wonder they marvelled one at another because they could not see how Joseph should know their respective ages, except by supernatural aid. Here was another mystery in the strange transaction. *The first-born according to his birthright, and the smallest (youngest) according to his smallness (youth.)*

34. *And he took*—impers.—*One took messes* (dishes.) The proper official or servant bore from Joseph's table the messes or portions allotted to each. This was to do them honor, and this gave opportunity to distinguish Benjamin above the rest by a *five-fold* portion. Five seems to have been the sacred number among the Egyptians. (See ch. 41 : 34 ; 45 : 22.) ¶ *Five times.* Heb.—*Five hands.* (See 1 Sam. 9 : 23, 24.) He thus expressed his special affection for his own brother, and tested the rest as to the envy and jealousy which such a treatment might awaken in them, as aforetime in his own case. ¶ *They drank and drank freely with him.* Not meaning that they drank excessively. (See Hag. 1 : 6 ; Sol. Song 5 : 1.) All their alarm and

CHAPTER XLIV.

AND he commanded the steward of his house, saying, Fill the men's sacks *with* food, as much as they can carry, and put every man's money in his sack's mouth.

2 And put my cup, the silver cup, in the sack's mouth of the youngest, and his corn money: and he did according to the word that Joseph had spoken.

3 As soon as the morning was light, the men were sent away, they, and their asses.

4 And when they were gone out of the city, *and* not yet far off, Joseph said unto his steward, Up, follow after the men; and when thou dost overtake them, say unto them, Wherefore have ye rewarded evil for good?

5 Is not this *it* in which my lord drinketh, and whereby indeed he divineth? ye have done evil in so doing.

6 ¶ And he overtook them, and he spake unto them these same words.

apprehension was put to rest by this cordial and generous hospitality. So our New Testament Joseph bids us sit at the table which He richly furnishes in His house. He anoints our head with oil, in token of honorable reception, and our cup runneth over. (Ps. 23 : 5.) And such condescending love puts all our doubts and fears to rest.

CHAPTER XLIV.

§ 67. SILVER CUP IN BENJAMIN'S SACK. JUDAH'S PLEA.

Joseph has yet one more expedient for putting his brothers to the test and preparing them, under their awakened anxiety, for the discovery which he will make of himself to them. He introduces another mysterious item into their affairs, which shall seem to them like the working of supernatural judgment bringing them to account. He will now contrive to put Benjamin in special peril, and see how they will act towards

him and whether their jealousy remains as it was in his case. Besides that, all this shall be calculated to revive the memories of their wicked treatment of him on account of envy.

1, 2. The command to the ruler or steward was now to fill the sacks and return the money as before, and, besides, to put his *silver cup* into the mouth of Benjamin's sack.

3-6. *So soon as it was light.* Heb. — *The morning was light, and the men were sent away, etc. They had left the city and were not far off, and Joseph said, etc. ¶ Wherefore, etc.—Why have ye rewarded evil instead of good? Is not this which my lord drinketh in it? and he, divining, will divine in it—will, or can, certainly divine in it.* This is said to enhance the value of the cup, as one fit for such incantations and auguries as the Egyptians were known to practise by cups or goblets. It is not said that Joseph actually used it for this purpose. And it would also suggest to them the idea of his familiarity with secret things and sacred mysteries

7 And they said unto him, Wherefore saith my lord these words? God forbid that thy servants should do according to this thing:

8 Behold, ^a the money which we found in our sack's mouths, we brought again unto thee out of the land of Canaan: how then should we steal out of thy lord's house silver or gold?

9 With whomsoever of thy servants it be found, ^b both let him die, and we also will be my lord's bond-men.

10 And he said, Now also *let it be* according unto your words: he with whom it is found shall be my servant; and ye shall be blameless.

11 Then they speedily took down every man his sack to the ground, and opened every man his sack.

12 And he searched, *and* began at the eldest, and left at the youngest: and the cup was found in Benjamin's sack.

13 Then they ^c rent their clothes, and laded every man his ass, and returned to the city.

a ch. 43: 21. b ch. 31: 32. c ch. 37: 29, 34; Num. 14: 6; 2 Sam. 1: 11.

(See vs. 15.) This would deepen their impression of supernatural agency at work in all this matter of their arrest and judgment, and would tend to quicken their consciences as to their great sin towards Joseph. *Jamblichus* speaks of these incantations. Clean water was poured into a goblet, and pieces of gold or silver or precious stones were dropped into the water, and the observations were then made from the appearance of the contents. Certain figures, reflected by the rays of light in pure water, were taken as indications of future events.

7-9. They protest their innocence. "*God forbid,*" etc. Heb.—*Far be it to thy servants from doing,* etc. They plead their honesty in the former case (returning the money found mysteriously in their sacks) in evidence of their innocence of this charge of theft. A man who is known to lie suffers the penalty by being disbelieved when he speaks the truth. And so a character for veracity will stand a man in stead when he is accused of falsehood. So, also,

in regard to one's established honesty when charged with theft. They are so conscious of rectitude that they at once propose that the one with whom the cup shall be found shall pay the forfeit by death, and the rest should go into bondage in Egypt. This was a very rash proposal, as the result proved.

10. The steward accepts this only in part, confining the punishment of servitude to the one with whom the cup should be found—the rest to be acquitted.

11. *Then, etc.* Heb.—*And they hastened and took down.* They were most eager for the search, to prove their innocence.

12. The search was made by the steward, and, as he passed from the eldest down, they were doubtless exulting in their undoubted clearance, when, lo! at the very last, in the bag of the one who could least of all have done it, and whom they could bear the least of all to be sacrificed, the cup is found!

13. What now shall they do? They are horror-struck, and give

14 ¶ And Judah and his brethren came to Joseph's house, (for he *was* yet there :) and they ^a fell before him on the ground.

15 And Joseph said unto them, What deed *is* this that ye have done? wot ye not that such a man as I can certainly divine?

16 And Judah said, What shall we say unto my lord? what shall we speak? or how shall we clear ourselves? God hath found out the iniquity of thy servants: behold, ^e we *are* my lord's servants, both we, and *he* also with whom the cup is found.

17 And he said, ^f God forbid that I should do so: *but* the man in whose hand the cup is found, he shall be my servant; and as for you, get you up in peace unto your father.

d ch. 37: 7. e ver. 9. f Prov. 17: 15.

vent to their bitter grief. But they will not leave Benjamin to his hapless fate of a slave. They will at once return to the city (not far off), and make their defence and plea.

14. Judah, who had become surety for Benjamin to his aged father, heads the procession, and they come to the house of Joseph and find him still there. He doubtless expected to hear from them very soon. They again bow before him. Again his dream is fulfilled. He has the destiny of the family in his hands. God has plainly invested him with superiority, so that they cannot evade his power nor escape out of his hands. Must they not, all this while, think of Joseph's dreams, and conclude that there is some mysterious connection between them and these events? Perhaps they think that, as they wickedly put him out of the way rather than bow to him, God is making them bow to another—a stranger—a foreign lord—instead of to Joseph. Now they are stung to the quick.

15. Joseph challenges them with the strange and ugly-looking facts. ¶ *Wot ye not.* Heb.—*Do ye not know that a man who is as I, divining will divine*—can or could certainly divine this? This refers them to the supernatural features of the case, to

stir their conscience to the depths. Joseph does not profess to divine. He only claims this prerogative for such an one as he, and refers to his supernatural knowledge as being manifest in the case such as they were wont to attribute to diviners. Though they do not yet recognize Joseph, must they not think of his dreams?

16, 17. Judah does not attempt any defence. Though he is conscious of innocence, he does not see how to stand up against the stubborn fact—the finding of the cup. Heb.—*What shall we say to my lord—how shall we speak, and how shall we justify ourselves?* The God (the Personal God) *has found out the wickedness of thy servants.* Not that he confesses this theft, but the wickedness of life, and especially that grievous sin against Joseph. (See ch. 42: 21.) This is the desired result. He is smitten with the reproach of their sin in selling Joseph. This was doubtless the effect of Joseph's expedients, under Divine direction, to bring them to this sense of sin in their treatment of him, before he shall reveal himself as their brother. Our Kinsman Redeemer does the same. He brings us to a sharp sense of sin in order to be more welcome when He reveals Himself as the Sa-

18 ¶ Then Judah came near unto him, and said, O my lord, let thy servant, I pray thee, speak a word in my lord's ears, and ^g let not thine anger burn against thy servant: for thou *art* even as Pharaoh.

19 My lord asked his servants, saying, Have ye a father, or a brother?

20 And we said unto my lord, We have a father, an old man, and ^h a child of his old age, a little one: and his brother is dead, and he alone is left of his mother, and his father loveth him.

21 And thou saidst unto thy servants, ⁱ Bring him down unto me, that I may set mine eyes upon him.

22 And we said unto my lord, The lad cannot leave his father: for *if* he should leave his father, *his father* would die.

23 And thou saidst unto thy servants, ^k Except your youngest brother come down with you, ye shall see my face no more.

24 And it came to pass, when we came up unto thy servant my father, we told him the words of my lord.

25 And ^l our father said, Go again, *and* buy us a little food.

26 And we said, We cannot go down: if our youngest brother

^g ch. 18: 30, 32; Exod. 32: 22. ^h ch. 37: 3. ⁱ ch. 42: 15: 20. ^k ch. 43: 3, 5. ^l ch. 43: 2.

viour of sinners. This makes the gospel *glad tidings* to such. Judah will now give up all claim to freedom for all of them, though none were to be held guilty but the possessor of the cup. And so the steward replies.

17. Will the brothers now leave Benjamin to his fate, and go home with the sad tale to Jacob?

18-20. Judah now pleads as only one can plead whose whole soul is stirred to an agony of prayer. Now Judah proves himself a wrestler like Jacob. "I would give very much," says *Luther*, "if I could pray to our Lord God as well as Judah prays to Joseph here; for it is a perfect specimen of prayer—the true feeling that there ought to be in prayer." He recites the tender items in the history, seizing upon the points most calculated to move the stoutest heart, and skilfully weaving his plea so as to make it a model of pathos and force. It has the eloquence of facts—of facts

such as must move any heart that is not past feeling. The alternative is given in the very words of Jacob—that his gray hairs must be brought down with sorrow to the grave. ¶ *A word.* He asks the privilege of speaking a word.

"Say, what is prayer, when it is prayer indeed?
The mighty utterance of a mighty need."

He begs that the lord's anger may not burn against him. He is in his power; the evidence is against him; he may be consigned to swift destruction; the facts are fatal to his case. But he will press his suit, if possible to get a hearing. He owns the royal authority which he addresses,—*For so art thou as Pharaoh*,—but he must tell the facts, in some faint hope of prevalence.

21. *Set my eyes upon him* to show him favor. (Jer. 39: 12; 40: 4.)

be with us, then will we go down; for we may not see the man's face, except our youngest brother *be* with us.

27 And thy servant my father said unto us, Ye know that ^m my wife bare me two *sons*:

28 And the one went out from me, and I said, ⁿ Surely he is torn in pieces; and I saw him not since:

29 And if ye ^o take this also from me, and mischief befall him, ye shall bring down my gray hairs with sorrow to the grave.

30 Now therefore when I come to thy servant my father, and the lad *be* not with us; (seeing that ^p his life is bound up in the lad's life;)

31 It shall come to pass, when he seeth that the lad *is* not *with* us, that he will die: and thy servants shall bring down the gray hairs of thy servant our father with sorrow to the grave.

32 For thy servant became surety for the lad unto my father, saying, ^q If I bring him not unto thee, then I shall bear the blame to my father forever.

33 Now therefore, I pray thee, ^r let thy servant abide instead of the lad a bond-man to my lord; and let the lad go up with his brethren.

34 For how shall I go up to my father, and the lad *be* not with me? lest peradventure I see the evil that shall come on my father.

CHAPTER XLV.

THEN Joseph could not refrain himself before all them that stood by him; and he cried, Cause every man to go out from me: and

^m ch. 46: 19. ⁿ ch. 37: 33. ^o ch. 42: 36, 33. ^p 1 Sam. 18: 1. ^q ch. 43: 9. Exod. 32: 32.

27. *My wife.* "Jacob regards Rachel alone as his actual wife." (Ch. 46: 19.)

28. *And I said.* Heb.—"*And I was obliged to say, Only torn in pieces has he become.*"—Keil and Delitzsch.

30, 31. He calls attention to the bitter, fatal consequence of going home without Benjamin. ¶ *His soul* (of the father) *is bound up in his* (the youth's) *soul.* He loves him as his own soul. ¶ *Will have sinned, forever*—will be held forever guilty.

33. Judah is even ready to forego all the charms of home, and submit to wear out his life in Egyptian

bondage, rather than have such a calamity befall his father as the loss of Benjamin. And he had so plighted his faith to his father, though he was the birthright son. It is through this Judah that our blessed Lord comes; and this is His proposal—to bear the curse that would fall upon us; and, though Himself the birthright Son, He would endure the cross, despising the shame, that we—the humblest, youngest, or obscurest of us—may go free, and that His Father's pleasure may be fulfilled in the salvation of His chosen. "He was made a curse for us."

there stood no man with him, while Joseph made himself known unto his brethren.

2 And he wept aloud; and the Egyptians and the house of Pharaoh heard.

CHAPTER XLV.

§ 68. JOSEPH DISCOVERS HIMSELF TO HIS BRETHREN. SENDS FOR JACOB.

"Now at length all the love, which during twenty-two long years had been pent up in Joseph's breast, bursts forth with irrepressible might."—*De Sola*. Joseph can no longer conceal his feelings as a brother. No official garb can cover any longer the brother's heart. Judah's appeal was overwhelming. And now the great object of Joseph was gained, under God, in bringing the recreant brothers to the sharpest sense of their misdeeds, so as the better to prepare them for the glad and gracious discovery of himself as their savior. Such trials and vexations are in God's plan of discipline for bringing sinners to salvation. And this history, in which Joseph acts as the type of our New Testament Joseph, only shows us how God pleases often by a series of delays and disappointments to prepare us for the revelation and appreciation of His grace. It was so with the sisters at Bethany. It is so with us all. "Be sober and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ, whom having not seen we love." Our Elder Brother aims, in the midst of all our severest trials, to reveal Himself—walking on the wave at the fourth watch, standing on the shore when we have caught nothing. Blessed is he who can first cry out, like the beloved disciple, *It is the Lord*. (John 21 : 7). Joseph did not

contemplate severity. He would only be satisfied by all the tests, that the brothers were in a state of mind to be trusted with his favor.

1. Joseph's brotherly heart was now so stirred to the depths that he could not contain himself. He was in danger of giving way to his feelings in the presence of the Egyptian attendants. But there are feelings that "the stranger intermeddleth not with." To have allowed those outsiders to remain would have been to expose the whole history to the needless damage and shame of the brothers. He therefore commanded accordingly. ¶ *Cause every man*—that is, except the brothers—and *there stood no man with him*. He was left alone with them, for the trying, exciting disclosure of this deep secret of his heart. Must they not have had their misgivings? Was there nothing at all in feature, voice, or manner to give any hint of Joseph?

2. *He wept aloud*. Heb.—*He gave (lifted up) his voice in weeping*. How his tender, fond, fraternal heart now shows itself in tears to be the heart of Joseph. Before he could give utterance amidst his choking emotions, must they not have seen the long-lost brother in the swimming eyes and piercing tones of love? It was the wicked brothers who should have filled the house with outcries and bitter groans of repentance. But it is Joseph who weeps in the presence of the transgressors. How our New Testament Joseph weeps at the grave of Lazarus to think of all the ravages which sin has made!

"He wept that we might weep
Each sin demands a tear."

3 And Joseph said unto his brethren : ^a *I am Joseph* ; doth my father yet live ? And his brethren could not answer him ; for they were troubled at his presence.

4 And Joseph said unto his brethren, Come near to me, I pray you : and they came near : and he said, *I am Joseph your brother*, ^b whom ye sold into Egypt.

a Acts 7 : 13. b ch. 37 : 28.

Not your tears, sinner, but the tears and agonies of Jesus must avail for salvation. No wonder that Joseph wept at the thought of home, of the dear old father in his sore distress, of these wayward brothers in their tribulation, and of all the exciting discoveries that he had in his heart to make to them for the salvation of the household. ¶ *The Egyptians and the house of Pharaoh*—the royal family—*heard*. The attendants just put out from his presence would naturally have heard, and the report would go to the Egyptian court from these officials.

3. He must now speak out in plainest terms. This is the great secret. *I (am) Joseph*. How this brief sentence goes to their heart, explains the mystery, fills them with awe and self-reproach, yet invites their confidence. How we are reminded of Saul of Tarsus, when our New Testament Joseph reveals Himself to him. "Who art thou, Lord ? I AM JESUS whom thou persecutest." What shall Joseph now say ? Shall he remind them of the pit and the sale into slavery, to confound them utterly ? No ! He asks only "*Doth my father yet live ?*" This is to confess them as his brethren, by acknowledging their common father. So Jesus is not ashamed to call us *brethren*. (Heb. 2 : 11.) Only as a next step will Joseph refer to their wrong-doing, and then the rather to bid them not be grieved nor angry with themselves so as to keep them aloof from him with fear. He had

heard them speak of his father as alive. But the fondness of his filial nature breaks forth in this tender inquiry after his father. And thus he discovers himself as yet their brother, notwithstanding all their alienation and all that had occurred. ¶ *Troubled*. Confounded before him. The sense of sin drives us away from God. Adam hides in the thickets of Paradise. Only the revelation of Divine love to sinners can bring us to confidence and comfort. Accordingly this is the gospel plan.

4. *Come near to me*. How inexpressibly tender and loving. How disposed to forget and bury their sin. He invites them to his free favor. So our Joseph in the gospel bids us *come to Him*. This is the gospel message, *Come unto me*. Already they are assured that this is a gracious invitation. This is the entreaty of love. He will have them approach more closely and come boldly that he may more fully reveal himself, and open his heart to them. They felt the power of this gracious word and *they came near*. ¶ And he said, only what would more fully reassure them, *I am Joseph your brother*. Before it was only, "I am Joseph," now he adds, *your brother*. He recognizes the relation as unbroken by all their harsh dealing. We are yet sons, though prodigal sons. So our Joseph is "not ashamed to call us *brethren*." "He that doeth the will of God, the same is *my brother*, and sister, and mother." Yet he will refer to their sin,—*whom ye sold*

5 Now therefore ^cbe not grieved, nor angry with yourselves, that ye sold me hither: ^dfor God did send me before you to preserve life.

6 For these two years *hath* the famine *been* in the land: and yet *there are* five years, in the which *there shall* neither *be* earing nor harvest.

7 And God sent me before you, to preserve you a posterity in the earth, and to save your lives by a great deliverance.

c Isa. 40: 2; 2 Cor. 2: 7. d ch. 50: 20; Ps. 105; 16, 17; 2 Sam. 16: 10, 11; Acts 4: 24.

into Egypt. So said our Joseph to Saul, *I am Jesus whom thou persecutest*. But this is all a revelation of gospel grace. *It is hard for thee* (He does not say, *It is hard for me*) to kick against the pricks. So here. ¶ *Now therefore be not grieved nor angry with yourselves*, etc. Lit.—*Let it not burn in your eyes*. Now he will point them to the grand scheme of redemption. He will lead them away from themselves, and from self-reproaches, and from despair, to view the gracious ways of God in the salvation of His people. Let not your feelings terminate in self-condemnation for your sins, though grief and self-abhorrence are appropriate enough. But look beyond all this at the gracious plan of God. His providence is redemptive. His redemption is providential. God's hand was in this matter; and with a saving purpose to *preserve life*. He sent him before them. So sang the Psalmist: "He sent a man before them, even Joseph, who was sold for a servant." (Ps. 105: 17.) And the psalm recites the items of Joseph's history in the language of devout praise to God. So of our New Testament Joseph the apostle says, "Whom being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God ye have taken and by wicked hands have crucified and slain." This only shows God's absolute control of all creatures and

events, but it in no wise excuses the conduct of the wicked that God can and does overrule it to accomplish His own holy purposes, for the covenant household.

6. *For these two years*. Murphy notices hence that the sons of Jacob obtained a supply on the first occasion sufficient for a year. *Five years* out of the seven remained, and these were to be years of severest famine, *in which there would be neither earing nor harvest*. *To ear* in the Anglo Saxon means to *plough*—from the word "*erian*." It is so used, Exod. 34: 12; Deut. 21: 4. There would be no tillage because no crop, and hence no inducement to till the soil. If the famine was occasioned by a failure of the Nile to overflow on account of excessive drought, then the land would be in no condition to plant. (Ch. 41: 57.)

7. He repeats here the reference to God's agency for good to them, in all the history. It was *to preserve you a posterity in the earth*—"to establish you a remnant upon the earth. (Compare 2 Sam. 14: 7)—to secure to you the preservation of the tribe and of posterity during this famine," *and to preserve your lives by a great deliverance*, or "*to a great deliverance—to a great nation delivered from destruction*."—*Keil*. (Ch. 50: 20.) Thus Joseph predicts the grand and gracious results.

8 So now *it was* not you *that* sent me hither, but God: and he hath made me ^e a father to Pharaoh, and lord of all his house, and a ruler throughout all the land of Egypt.

9 Haste ye, and go up to my father, and say unto him, Thus saith thy son Joseph, God hath made me lord of all Egypt; come down unto me, tarry not:

10 And ^f thou shalt dwell in the land of Goshen, and thou shalt be near unto me, thou, and thy children, and thy children's children, and thy flocks, and thine herds, and all that thou hast:

11 And there will I nourish thee, (for yet *there are* five years

e ch. 41: 43; Judg. 17: 10; Job 29: 16. f ch. 47: 1.

8. *So now.* Again he insists that it was God (even more than they) who was concerned in sending him to Egypt. Heb.—*Ha-Elohim*. The personal God—author and dispenser of all events. “God executes His decrees in the works of creation and Providence.” ¶ *A father to Pharaoh*—Governor.—*Kalisch*. Second author of life to him.—*Murphy*. Most confidential counsellor and friend.—*Keil*. So Haman is styled a second father to Artaxerxes. (Esther 13: 6. See *Greek*.) ¶ *Lord*, etc. (Comp. ch. 41: 40, 41.) God's hand was in his transfer to Egypt, as part of a plan for his elevation over all the land, overruling the wicked devices of his brethren to fulfil His purpose as predicted in the dreams.

9. Joseph will now send them back to their father with such exciting news, and such inviting message. He will have them *hasten*. His filial heart longs to have his father there where he can cheer and comfort and support his declining years, and bind up this grievous wound, before his death. He will put forward in the front of the whole matter, not the wicked brothers, but *God* as He who hath elevated to such place and power the old man's son and their brother, the long-lost Joseph. What an astounding result of their mission!

Better than abundance of corn is it, to be assured that the lord of the granaries is his own Joseph. How blessed to know from the gospel that the dispenser of universal providence and the proprietor of the universe is our God, forever and ever,—that our elder brother is exalted at the right hand of the Majesty on high. And then the message, *come down unto me—tarry not*. (So John 14.) Faith in the Father and the Son is the cure for heart-trouble. “I will surely come again to take you to myself that where I am there ye may be also.”

10. He already has a place prepared for the covenant household. “*Thou shalt dwell in the land of Goshen*.” This was the most fertile part of the land, best suited for shepherds, east of the Nile, and not far from the capital of the Pharaohs,—easily reached by carriage. It was not exclusively occupied by the Hebrews, for, in the time of the Exodus, the dwellings of the Hebrews were marked to distinguish them from those of the Egyptians, against the destroying angel. (Exod. 12: 23.) The covenant household is now to be transferred to Egypt, for their development from a family to a nation. (Ch. 47: 11.)

11. *I will nourish thee*. This is

of famine;) lest thou, and thine household, and all that thou hast come to poverty.

12 And behold, your eyes see, and the eyes of my brother Benjamin, that *it is* ^g my mouth that speaketh unto you.

13 And ye shall tell my father of all my glory in Egypt, and of all that ye have seen: and ye shall haste, and ^h bring down my father hither.

14 And he fell upon his brother Benjamin's neck, and wept; and Benjamin wept upon his neck.

15 Moreover, he kissed all his brethren, and wept upon them: and after that his brethren talked with him.

g ch. 42: 23. h Acts 7: 14.

Joseph's pledge for all the years of famine—his guarantee to supply him with food and maintain him and his house during all the severities of the coming five years, *lest thou and thy household and all that thou hast come to poverty.* Joseph speaks as one having authority. He who has such power to forgive has also such power to give. "Whether is easier to say?" (Mark 2: 9.) ¶ *Come to poverty.* Heb.—*Be stripped* of all things and possessed by another. Joseph kept his word to the letter. (Ch. 47: 12.)

12. He appeals to their natural senses in proof of his identity. *You see*, he says, *that it is I.* *The eyes of my brother Benjamin* must recognize me, that it is *my mouth that speaketh unto you.* Onk.—*That I speak to you in your own language.* He spoke now without an interpreter in his native tongue, and they must have known now that it was he indeed, strange, incredible as it might seem. So our Joseph reveals Himself that we may not fail to recognize Him. *It is I*, be not afraid. (1.) Filial piety is beautiful. (2.) It is a shame to a son when he becomes exalted to despise and neglect his poor parents.

13. He bids them bear to *his father* a full report of all that they had seen with their own eyes of his *glory*

in Egypt, of his power and prerogative in the land of plenty. And he will have them *hasten and bring down his father thither.* So our Joseph prays, "Father, I will that they also whom thou hast given me be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory." His glory and happiness will be doubled to him by having his father share the benefits.

14. Now he could no longer keep off the neck of his dear brother Benjamin, the pet, and pride, and joy of his bereaved father. After the Oriental manner he expressed his emotion by falling on his neck and kissing him. (Ch. 50: 1.) This emotion and affection was responded to by Benjamin in like manner. The devotion was mutual.

15. In the spirit of a fond brother, and not of an offended judge, he kisses all of them as well as Benjamin, and thus assures them of forgiveness more expressly than any labored language could have done. The effect was manifestly as he desired. They were emboldened to speak to him after this. After he had thus assured them thrice of God's gracious hand in the matter of his elevation to power in Egypt, and after he had certified them of a brother's love notwithstanding all their

16 ¶ And the fame thereof was heard in Pharaoh's house, saying, Joseph's brethren are come: and it pleased Pharaoh well, and his servants.

17 And Pharaoh said unto Joseph, Say unto thy brethren, This do ye; lade your beasts, and go, get you unto the land of Canaan;

18 And take your father, and your households, and come unto me: and I will give you the good of the land of Egypt, and ye shall eat ⁱ the fat of the land.

19 Now thou art commanded, this do ye; take you wagons out of the land of Egypt for your little ones, and for your wives, and bring your father, and come.

20 Also regard not your stuff: for the good of all the land of Egypt is yours.

i ch. 27: 28; Numb. 18: 12, 29.

wickedness, they ventured then *to talk with him*. After all our Joseph's assurances by word and deed in the gospel, by His loving life, and His living love, we may come boldly to the throne, seeing it is *the throne of grace*. Our Elder Brother, our Kinsman Redeemer is such an one as we need. Our Joseph will have us emboldened to talk with Him in prayer and communion.

16, 17. The *fame* or *report* of their arrival was soon heard in the palace of Pharaoh, and the king and his servants were well pleased that Joseph's brethren had come. Joseph was so highly respected and honored, that what pleased him so much would please the royal court. Though Joseph had already given them commandment to go and bring their father and all the household to settle in Egypt (vs. 9, 11), it was probably not without Pharaoh's knowledge and consent. And now the king most formally extends to them, through Joseph, the invitation in most large and liberal terms. Joseph had spoken only of the five years of famine, as if he contemplated their temporary sojourn there. But Pharaoh seemingly invites them to a permanent settlement—promises

to them the best *produce* of the land. (See vs. 20, 23; ch. 24: 10.) *The fat* of the land is the choicest product of the land.

19. *Thou art commanded*. This royal command to Joseph was requisite, since it was strictly forbidden that wagons should be taken out of Egypt. (See vs. 21.) *Wilkinson* says that "wagons were commonly used in Egypt for travelling, and Strabo performed the journey from Syene to the spot where he crossed the river to visit Philæ in one of these carriages." Vehicles are described on the monuments as two-wheeled—chariot-shaped. At this day a few carriages are to be seen in Alexandria, even an omnibus meets you at the wharf. And in Cairo a European carriage, four-wheeled with two horses, may be occasionally seen driven through the street, preceded by an usher who cracks a huge whip and cries out to the people to clear the narrow street, lest they be run over. We took such a carriage from our hotel in Cairo to go to Heliopolis. But the deep sand so clogged the vehicle, that we found it expedient to unharness the horses and take to their backs.

20. *Regard not your stuff*. Heb.

21 And the children of Israel did so: and Joseph gave them wagons, according to the commandment of Pharaoh, and gave them provision for the way.

22 To all of them he gave each man changes of raiment: but to Benjamin he gave three hundred *pieces* of silver, and ^k five changes of raiment.

23 And to his father he sent after this *manner*; ten asses laden with the good things of Egypt, and ten she-asses laden with corn and bread and meat for his father by the way.

24 So he sent his brethren away, and they departed: and he said unto them, See that ye fall not out by the way.

k ch. 43: 34.

—*Let not your eye care for—look with mourning at—your goods—your furniture and household goods.* The king was rich enough to afford them ample outfit in their new settlement in Egypt. Our Joseph is rich, and why need we care for these articles of our mere temporary habitation? “For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God.” “All things are yours—the world, life, death—things present, things to come.” “This free and honorable invitation of Pharaoh is related circumstantially because it involved the right of Israel to leave Egypt again without hindrance.”

21. It was done according to the royal direction and Joseph's plan. And Joseph gave the brothers wagons according to—at the mouth of—Pharaoh, and gave them *provision for the way*. Wheeled vehicles are scarcely seen in Palestine.

22. To show his liberality towards them, as well as most favorably to impress his aged father and conciliate him to return with them, he gave them, according to Oriental custom, *changes of raiment*, fine holiday dresses, to *change* for a special occasion. *But to Benjamin three hundred pieces* (shekels) *of silver and five changes of raiment.* (Ch. 41:

34.) Oriental dresses, as they continue in fashion, are of permanent value, and constitute a large portion of the wealth of families. Joseph would show his special fondness for his own brother, and this would no longer excite the jealousy of the rest, while it would touch the heart of the doting father. Parents are often best won by especial attentions to their children.

23. *To his father.* Joseph sent the most substantial gifts—loads of the best produce of Egypt, and loads of food for the aged *father by the way*, that his journey to Egypt might be richly provided for in every way.

24. Joseph had one injunction for his brethren on their journey. *See that ye fall not out by the way.* Gr. —*Do not get angry by the way.* Calvin suggests that this was to guard them against charging each other with the blame of Joseph's exile, and thus, by mutual criminations, becoming involved in disputes and quarrels about Joseph. So excited as they would be, and so left to themselves to dwell upon the strange, amazing facts of Joseph's history, it was most natural to fear this result. Brothers of our Joseph should love one another, and not indulge in mutual censures and reproofs, to rend the household of faith, but comfort one

25 ¶ And they went up out of Egypt, and came into the land of Canaan unto Jacob their father,

26 And told him, saying, Joseph is yet alive, and he is governor over all the land of Egypt. ¹ And Jacob's heart fainted, for he believed them not.

27 And they told him all the words of Joseph, which he had said unto them: and when he saw the wagons which Joseph had sent to carry him, the spirit of Jacob their father revived:

28 And Israel said, *It is enough*: Joseph my son is yet alive: I will go and see him before I die.

1 Job 29: 24; Ps. 126: 1; Luke 24: 11, 41.

another with these gospel words of pardon, peace, and salvation. *Kalisch* reads, "*Do not be afraid on the way.*" "The word admits of this meaning. The brothers had indeed to convey to their father a most joyous and happy message; but, in doing this, they were obliged at once to confess to him the detestable crime committed by them against Joseph. How could they face his look of mingled reproach and horror?" Besides, the shameful deception practised upon their father during these long years must now be confessed to him with deepest shame and disgrace.

25, 26. They left Egypt, accordingly, and came into Canaan, with all their imposing equipage. And what a message have they for the anxious and depressed father! In few words they tell the grand story—a living, loving Joseph, lord of all Egypt! This is better than the largest stores of corn for the famine. The proprietor of the land of plenty is the long-lost son!

"If thou hast wherewithal to spice a draught

When griefs prevail,
And for the future time art heir
To th' Isle of Spices—is't not fair?"

Joseph is still living—yea (emphatic)
he is ruler in all the land of Egypt.
And Jacob's heart fainted (stopped,)

for he believed them not. The news was only too good to be credited. How could he believe such astounding good tidings, without most special evidence?

27. He listened to all the words of Joseph, and the doubting heart was incredulous. So we hesitate to believe the gospel. The good news seems too good for sinners. We think there must be some mistake—some work to be done by us—not everything for nothing! Free favor, free grace! It seems too much. ¶ *When he saw the wagons which Joseph had sent to carry him, the spirit of Jacob their father revived.* When we see the history of redemption, the progress of Christianity, the means of grace, our confidence in God's gracious intent is strengthened. When the Christian at last sees the provision made for his departure, the Intercessor gone before, the mansion prepared, the escort of angels, the welcome home, he receives dying grace, and often is most cheered and comforted in death. *The spirit of Jacob revived.*

28. *And Israel said.* "Jacob" now becomes "Israel." His faith triumphs. His grief of twenty-two years is ended. *It is enough!* The assurance of a Living Lord and Saviour is soul-satisfying. We want to go and see Him. Phil. 1: 23.

CHAPTER XLVI.

AND Israel took his journey with all that he had, and came to ^a Beersheba, and offered sacrifices ^b unto the God of his father Isaac.

2 And God spake unto Israel ^c in the visions of the night, and said, Jacob, Jacob! and he said, Here *am* I.

3 And he said, I *am* God, ^d the God of thy father: fear not to go down into Egypt; for I will there ^e make of thee a great nation:

^a ch. 21: 31, 33, and 28: 10. ^b ch. 26: 24, 25, and 28: 13, and 31: 42. ^c ch. 15: 1; Job 33: 14, 15. ^d ch. 28: 13. ^e ch. 12: 2; Deut 26: 5.

CHAPTER XLVI.

§ 69. GOD APPEARS TO JACOB. THE MIGRATION OF JACOB'S HOUSE.

“The second dream of Joseph is now to receive its fulfilment. His father is to bow down before him. His mother is dead. The figure by which the dream shadows forth the reality is fulfilled when the spirit of it receives its accomplishment.”—*Murphy*. Israel was now passing from the condition of a *family* in Canaan to become a *nation* in Egypt, and so to return to the promised land. This was the second stage of the covenant history, and the second stage of necessary development from the chosen family to become a covenant nation, first for training in Canaan, and thenceforth never to be lost sight of, in all the future history of the world. “Israel was God’s illuminated clock set in the dark steeple of time.”

1. Jacob now *journeyed with all that he had* to take up a new abode, further fulfilling the Divine plan and prediction (ch. 15: 13,) in a land of strangers, as a second stage in the accomplishment of the four hundred years of oppression. The church now enters into the domain

of heathendom to give and take, until the church shall appropriate to itself all the world’s resources, and fill the whole earth. Jacob, on his part, recognizes God’s covenant leading, and as *he came to Beersheba*, the frontier town, where Abraham and Isaac had acknowledged God (ch. 21: 33; 26: 24, 25), he *offered sacrifices to the God of his father Isaac*. Thus he, on his part, attested the covenant which God had made with his fathers. How blessed, amidst all the changes of the household, to have a family covenant with its sacred seals.

2. It was a crisis in the patriarchal history, at which we might expect God to appear to Jacob. He was leaving the sacred soil for a strange land. He was taking with him his family and his earthly all for a new abode, among heathen. And though Joseph was there in power, by the manifest providence of his Covenant God, he naturally trembled for the future of his household, when he should so soon be laid in the grave. But he receives assurance upon these points, *in the visions of the night*, that is, in such revelations as God was wont to make to the patriarchs in dreams and visions during the night-seasons. (See Job 33: 15.)

3. Thus did God appear to him in his flight from Canaan (ch. 28.

4 ^f I will go down with thee into Egypt; and I will also surely ^g bring thee up *again*: and ^h Joseph shall put his hand upon thine eyes.

5 And ⁱ Jacob rose up from Beer-sheba: and the sons of Israel carried Jacob their father, and their little ones, and their wives, in the wagons ^k which Pharaoh had sent to carry him.

6 And they took their cattle, and their goods which they had gotten in the land of Canaan, and came into Egypt, ^l Jacob, and all his seed with him;

7 His sons, and his sons' sons with him, his daughters, and his sons' daughters, and all his seed brought he with him into Egypt.

^f ch. 23: 15, and 48: 21. ^g ch. 15: 16, and 50: 13, 24, 25; Exod. 3: 8. ^h ch. 50: 1. ⁱ Acts 7: 15. ^k ch. 45: 19, 21. ^l Deut. 26: 5; Josh. 24: 4; Ps. 105: 23; Isa. 52: 4.

12.) revealing Himself (1.) as *the Omnipotent*—(*Ha-EL*) *the Mighty One*—able to fulfil all His covenant engagements and to carry him through all difficulties of the present and the future; (2.) as *the God of thy father*, recognizing the household covenant and the patriarchal history throughout, as not by any means to be overlooked. This was the comforting aspect in which he needed now to behold God's dealings. ¶ *Fear not*. This would signify to him that he should go down into Egypt under the Divine protection. And this is declared to be an important item in the Divine plan, and in the covenant history. ¶ *For there will I make of thee a great nation*. (See Exod. 1: 20; 12: 37.) This word of encouragement and of promise was the more important as Isaac his father had been forbidden to go into Egypt. (Ch. 26: 2.) The time had now come for the promised expansion of the family into the nation, that so they might in due season occupy the promised land.

4. It was further promised that he should have the presence of God with him in going down to that land of strangers, and that he should not be left there, but be brought up again (in his descendants, of course),

in the fulness of the time. Besides, it was most consoling to the patriarch to know that his favorite Joseph would close his eyes in death, as he had already been assured that he should be buried with his fathers in peace. (Ch. 15: 15.) The passage here is emphatic. "*I will go down with thee into Egypt, and I—bring thee up again also will I; and Joseph shall close thine eyes.*" Jacob was now one hundred and thirty years old, and Joseph thirty-nine; Reuben about forty-six, and Benjamin about twenty-six.

5–7. The descent is now described. The sons of Jacob convey the patriarch and the entire household *in the wagons which Pharaoh had sent to carry him*. *The goods which they had gotten* include all their substance. ¶ *Daughters*, etc. Only one daughter is named in the list, and one granddaughter. There may have been other daughters and granddaughters, who, if they married to Egyptians, or other strangers, (or for other reasons,) would not be included in the genealogical list, as "mothers in Israel." (See *Turner*.) Or "the plural may be adopted in order to correspond with the general form of classification."—*Murphy*. We can see reasons why God would so order

¶ 8 And ^m these *are* the names of the children of Israel, which came into Egypt, Jacob and his sons: ⁿ Reuben, Jacob's first-born.

9 And the sons of Reuben; Hanoch, and Phallu, and Hezron, and Carmi.

10 ¶ And ^o the sons of Simeon; Jemuel, and Jamin, and Ohad, and Jachin, and Zohar, and Shaul the son of a Canaanitish woman.

11 ¶ And the sons of ^p Levi; Gershon, Kohath, and Merari.

12 ¶ And the sons of ^a Judah; Er, and Onan, and Shelah, and Pharez, and Zarah: but ^r Er and Onan died in the land of Canaan. And ^s the sons of Pharez were Hezron and Hamul.

13 ¶ ^t And the sons of Issachar; Tola, and Phuvah, and Job, and Shimron.

14 ¶ And the sons of Zebulon; Sered, and Elon, and Jahleel.

15 These *be* the sons of Leah, which she bare unto Jacob in Padan-aram, with his daughter Dinah: all the souls of his sons and his daughters *were* thirty and three.

16 ¶ And the sons of Gad; ^u Ziphion, and Haggi, Shuni, and Ezbon, Eri, and Arodi, and Areli.

17 ¶ ^x And the sons of Asher; Jimnah, and Ishuah, and Isui, and Beriah, and Serah their sister. And the sons of Beriah; Heber and Malchiel.

18 ^y These *are* the sons of Zilpah, ^z whom Laban gave to Leah his daughter: and these she bare unto Jacob, *even* sixteen souls.

19 The sons of Rachel, ^a Jacob's wife; Joseph and Benjamin.

20 ¶ ^b And unto Joseph in the land of Egypt were born Manasseh and Ephraim, which Asenath the daughter of Poti-pherah priest of On bare unto him.

21 ¶ ^c And the sons of Benjamin *were* Belah, and Becher, and Ashbel, Gera, and Naaman, ^d Ehi, and Rosh, ^e Muppim, and Huppim, and Ard.

22 These *are* the sons of Rachel, which were born to Jacob; all the souls *were* fourteen.

23 ¶ ^f And the sons of Dan; Hushim.

24 ¶ ^g And the sons of Naphtali; Jahzeel, and Guni, and Gezur, and Shillem.

m Ex. 1: 1, and 6: 14. n Numb. 26: 5; 1 Chron. 5: 1. o Ex. 6: 15; 1 Chron. 4: 24. p 1 Chron. 6: 1, 16. q 1 Chron. 2: 3, and 4: 21. r ch. 38: 3, 7, 10. s ch. 38: 29; 1 Chron. 2: 5. t 1 Chron. 7: 1. u Numb. 26: 15, &c. x 1 Chron. 7: 30. y ch. 30: 10. z ch. 29: 24. a ch. 44: 27. b ch. 41: 50. c 1 Chron. 7: 6, and 8: 1. d Numb. 26: 38. e Numb. 26: 39. f 1 Chron. 7: 12. g 1 Chron. 7: 13.

as that there should be such an excess of male children in Jacob's family for the first two generations. (See Kurtz.)

8-27. The catalogue here given of

this emigrating household has been severely criticised as *unhistorical*, while *Kalisch* pronounces it "*historical*," but not "*literal*." It is plain that the statement is a summary one—with

25 ^h These *are* the sons of Billah, ⁱ which Laban gave unto Rachel his daughter, and she bare these unto Jacob: all the souls *were* seven.

26 ^k All the souls that came with Jacob into Egypt, which came out of his loins, besides Jacob's sons' wives, all the souls *were* threescore and six;

27 And the sons of Joseph which were born him in Egypt, *were* two souls: ^l all the souls of the house of Jacob, which came into Egypt, were threescore and ten.

28 ¶ And he sent Judah before him unto Joseph, ^m to direct his face unto Goshen; and they came ⁿ into the land of Goshen.

^h ch. 30: 5, 7. ⁱ ch. 29: 29. ^k Ex. 1: 5. ^l Deut. 10: 22; Acts 7: 14. ^m ch. 31: 21. ⁿ ch. 47: 1.

an object, and from a special point of view—and it is also plain that there is no blundering, but that the author has all along intimated the explanation of his reckoning so as to clear up the difficulties to all such as are not aiming, in the spirit of contradiction, to deny the sacred text. ¶ *These are the names.* It is to be noted that Jacob himself is here included in the list—and is reckoned (vs. 15) along with his sons and his daughters who descended from Leah, his lawful wife—making up *thirty-three*. These with the descendants of Zilpah—*sixteen*—(vs. 18), and the descendants of Rachel (vs. 22), including Joseph and his two sons—*fourteen*—and the descendants of Billah—*seven*—make the total of *seventy* (vs. 27). Now these are expressly named as the children of Israel who came into Egypt (vs. 8), “Jacob and his sons.” These, therefore, are given both in their numbers and in their names, also, to make it clear how the total of *seventy* is counted and to be understood. How then can any one honestly accuse the historian of blundering or falsity? These are charges which apply rather to the critics in question. Jacob is counted in where he most properly belongs, along with the list of Leah

his lawful wife, counting Jacob himself and each of his sons,—Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar, and Zebulun, with their children, and omitting Er and Onan, who are noticed as having died in Canaan, but adding Hezron and Hamul, who are inserted in this place expressly, and for this reason as substitutes for Er and Onan, in the list of those who came into Egypt, and adding Dinah as notified, we find that the historian has most carefully made out his total of seventy, and in the briefest manner has given notice of those very particulars which are charged with difficulty. Why else should he insert “*the sons of Pharez*” immediately after the statement that Er and Onan had died in Canaan, except to plainly notify that these two great-grandsons of Jacob were to be counted in the place of Er and Onan, his grandsons who had died before the migration? And accordingly we find them reckoned, instead of their two deceased uncles, as making up the count. It was proper to name the facts, and he does it most expressly; as if he had said, “Had Er and Onan lived they would have filled the sacred number of *seventy*. But they having died, these two, their nephews, are substituted in the enumeration.”

But here a second difficulty occurs. The historian reckons those two sons of Pharez as among those who went down to Egypt. But if this was literally the fact, then, as *Murphy* supposes, Judah and Pharez must have been, at the most, in their fourteenth year, when their first sons, Er and Hezron, were born. Though this is not impossible at the East, yet it is more probable that Hezron and Hamul were born in Egypt, and are named here as in the place of Er and Onan, and so reckoned as constructively born in Canaan. We see the reason of this substitution when we find in the full census of the house of Israel (Numb. 26 : 20, 21) the names of Hezron and Hamul inserted as heads of families, and that in connection with the same statement, that "Er and Onan died in Canaan." But we find in vs. 20 that Joseph's two sons, who are expressly noticed as having been born in Egypt, are numbered with those who came down into Egypt with Jacob. And again in vs. 27 distinct notice is given of this fact, and then the summing up is made, including them in the number of the immigrants. But in this summary count (vs. 26) it is given in terms which explain all the facts. "All the souls that came with Jacob into Egypt, which came out of his loins, besides Jacob's sons' wives, all the souls were threescore and six." This reckoning omits Joseph and his two sons and Jacob, and gives notice that if they be left out, the total is more strictly speaking but sixty-six. The writer, therefore, evidently understands himself, and makes all reasonable effort to be understood. He cannot be charged with either blundering or falsity. "The writer's point of view, as *Kurtz* remarks, led him to regard the emigration of Joseph and his sons into Egypt as not actually completed until the whole house of which they

were members had formally settled there." His design was—as *Hartman* expresses it—to give a catalogue of the males of Jacob's family, whether born in Mesopotamia, Canaan, or Egypt, who became heads of families. Accordingly we find all the names in question on the list in Numbers 26 : 5-56. The list is clearly meant to be so understood. But another difficulty of the same sort occurs, and may be explained on the same general principle. Benjamin, who would seem to have been not more than twenty-six years old, and who appears in the history of Joseph as a youth, is here reckoned as having ten sons (vs. 21), though this is possible at the East. Two of these (Naaman and Ard) appear in Numbers 26 : 40 as grandsons, though these may have taken the place and names of their uncles. The list in Numbers gives only five sons of Benjamin as heads of families. "The wives of Jacob's sons are neither mentioned by name nor reckoned because the families of Israel were not founded by them, but by their husbands alone. So, of the daughters of Jacob and the daughters of his sons, only Dinah and Serah are named, because they were not the founders of separate houses." OBSERVE—(1.) That Joseph *went down into Egypt*; only it was twenty-two years before the family migration,—and he is properly, in such an account of founding the nation, reckoned in the list. (2.) Only those two sons of Joseph who were already born at the arrival of Jacob in Egypt (Ephraim and Manasseh) are reckoned, because these two were adopted by Jacob as his sons, shortly before his death, and thus they were raised to the rank of heads of tribes. The aim of the author is to mention the founders of the families into which the twelve tribes of Israel were subdivided in Moses' time. With some ver-

hal variations and slight exceptions, we find the list in Numbers containing all the names here given ; and that list is plainly meant to include "not only the sons and grandsons of Jacob who were already born when he went down into Egypt, but also those born afterwards who became founders of the *mishpachoth* or independent families, and who, on that account, were advanced to the position of the grandsons of Jacob, so far as the national organization was concerned."—See *Keil* and *Delitzsch*. This will also account for the omission of such names as fell out by death or did not attain to this position of family heads in the nation. Three of Benjamin's sons are of this class. And so it is said expressly in the final summary (vs. 27), *All the souls of the house of Jacob which came into Egypt*, all they who were founders of "the house of Jacob" (Israel), which came into Egypt (whether with Jacob or not), "were threescore and ten ;" while, in vs. 26, it is said, "all the souls which came with Jacob into Egypt, *which came out of his loins*," were threescore and six. (3.) The principle of reckoning is distinctly intimated in Deut. 10: 22, where the Hebrew text reads, "Thy fathers went down into Egypt in threescore and ten persons." Some of the seventy went down *in the loins* of their fathers—as Joseph's sons and those of Pharez, and those of Benjamin in part, as we may suppose. (4.) It remains to notice the reason for making up the reckoning of *seventy*. There was a significance in this. It is referred to in Deut. 32: 8. And by turning to Gen. 10th chapter, we find the nations "divided according to the number of the children of Israel," into *seventy*. So the Jews say (*Zohar*), "Seventy souls went down with Jacob into Egypt that they might restore the seventy families dispersed by the confusion of tongues." See *Prof. Green*.

"This is in accordance with the fact that the church is the counterpart of the world, not only in diversity of character and destiny, but also in the adaptation of the former to work out the restitution of all things to God in the latter."—*Murphy*. (See also Zech. 1: 18, 20.) On this whole subject see *Kurtz'* Hist. of the Covenant, Vol. II. 4; *Prof. Green*, the Pent. Vindicated, p. 44; *Keil* and *Delitzsch*, *Hengstenberg*, &c.

The discourse of Stephen (Acts 7: 14) gives the number as seventy-five. This may be founded on the Septuagint (Greek) version, which Stephen would naturally quote in speaking to those who used it, and which has the number as seventy-five, both here and in Exodus 1: 5, from adding three grandsons and two great grandsons of Joseph. But this Greek version may have been altered to correspond with Stephen's number, which, as it referred to Jacob and all his kindred, not including Joseph and his sons, would probably add the wives that accompanied the sons of Jacob, which must have been eight or nine, and so would make up seventy-five.—*Murphy*.
OBSERVE.—The forms of some of the names have altered during the two hundred and fifty years' interval from this event to the record in Numbers. Job (vs. 13) becomes Jashub, Numb. 26: 24. Jemuel and Zohar (vs. 10) are changed to Nemuel and Zerah, Numb. 26: 12, 13; Ziphion and Arodi (vs. 16) to Zephon and Arod, Numb. 26: 15, 17; Hupim (vs. 21) to Hupham, Numb. 26: 39; Ehi (vs. 21) to Ahiram, Numb. 26: 38. Also the different names, Ezbon (vs. 16) for Ozni, Numb. 26: 16; Muppim (vs. 21) for Shupham, Numb. 26: 39; and Hushim (vs. 23) for Shuham, Numb. 26: 42. Besides this, Simeon's son Ohad falls out of the register, and Asher's son Ishuah. These are the

29 And Joseph made ready his chariot, and went up to meet Israel his father to Goshen, and presented himself unto him: and he ^o fell on his neck, and wept on his neck a good while.

30 And Israel said unto Joseph, ^p Now let me die, since I have seen thy face, because thou *art* yet alive.

31 And Joseph said unto his brethren, and unto his father's house, ^q I will go up, and shew Pharaoh, and say unto him, My brethren, and my father's house, which *were* in the land of Canaan, are come unto me:

32 And the men *are* shepherds, for their trade hath been to feed

o ch. 45 : 14. p Luke 2 : 29, 30. q ch. 47 : 1.

only deviations, besides the sons of Benjamin, already noted. And these two registers are independent witnesses, with changes only such as are fairly accounted for and confirmatory of each other.

28. Having now arrived in the land, the patriarch *sent Judah before him to Joseph*. This son was qualified beyond his three older brothers for such an important mission—to get the proper directions for the settlement in Goshen, and to conduct him to the precise district appointed for them. (Ch. 45 : 10.) Thus *they came into the land of Goshen*, not without due notification to the royal court, and not without most definite instructions from head-quarters. “That Jacob should send Judah before him to receive from Joseph the necessary orders for those entering the country is entirely in accordance with the regulations of a well-organized kingdom, whose borders a wandering tribe is not permitted to pass unceremoniously. This account also agrees accurately with the information furnished on this point by the Egyptian monuments. That Jacob did not receive the orders of Joseph until he was at Goshen shows that this was the border land.”—*Egypt and Books of Moses*.

29. Joseph now *made ready his chariot*,—more light and elegant than the wagons, as belonging to the court-equipage, and drawn by horses

instead of oxen,—*and he went up, to meet Israel his father, to Goshen*. What a tender, melting interview was to be expected, after so long a time and such exciting events,—after such hopes and fears! *And he appeared before him—presented himself unto him*—the phrase that is commonly used of Divine appearances, so glorious and gracious and unexpected and overwhelming to the aged patriarch! Heb.—*And he fell upon his neck—remaining upon his neck, weeping*. Thus the aged father fulfils Joseph's dream, and pays obeisance to his son. This Oriental custom of cordial embrace is to rest the hands of each upon the shoulders of the other, and lay the head upon his neck; sometimes with kisses, at other times with tears, or with both. (Ch. 24 : 33; Luke 15 : 20.)

30. Now (Heb.—*this time*) *will I die, since I have seen thy face, that thou still alive*. What could the venerable, fond father desire more? How could he yet even believe his own eyes? This happy sight was to him the sum of all earthly bliss. How exalted and overwhelming the joy of Joseph to meet his fond father again in the flesh, and be able to minister so largely to the happiness of the dear old man and all the household! This is the highest privilege of a faithful, dutiful son.

31, 32. Joseph now proposes to

cattle; and they have brought their flocks, and their herds, and all that they have.

33 And it shall come to pass, when Pharaoh shall call you, and shall say, ^r What is your occupation?

34 That ye shall say, Thy servants' ^s trade hath been about cattle ^t from our youth even until now, both we, *and* also our fathers: that ye may dwell in the land of Goshen; for every shepherd *is* ^u an abomination unto the Egyptians.

r ch. 47: 2, 3. s v. 32. t ch. 30: 35, and 34: 5, and 37: 12. u ch. 43: 32. Exod. 8: 26.

announce their arrival to Pharaoh in due form, and to tell him of their occupation as shepherds, that their separate abode in Goshen might be freely granted by the king.

33, 34. They were instructed, also, to reply to Pharaoh's questioning that they were shepherds, or, more generally, keepers of cattle from of old; *because every shepherd is an abomination unto the Egyptians*. This would be the sufficient ground on which the district of Goshen would be granted to them, as keeping them more by themselves, and out of contact with the Egyptian people, and out of national and religious conflict with them. Why this hatred of shepherds existed in Egypt is matter of much dispute. Some have traced it to the previous invasion of Egypt by the Shepherd Kings from a border-land. (So *Wilkinson, Bunsen, Lepsius*, etc.) But this, it is answered, does not explain their abomination of a class of their own people, who were most important and indispensable. But "the ideas of rudeness and barbarism were associated with the very name of cattle-keepers"—the swine-herds being the most despised; and these were associated with the cow-herds in the seven castes, of which *all herdsmen* were of the *third and fourth* caste. Besides, there was a religious prejudice, as the Egyptians worshipped the bull and other animals of agriculture, and the shepherds were accustomed to

kill these sacred animals. All these elements may have entered into the deep-seated and long-standing national aversion. There is good evidence that the Hyksos, or Shepherd Kings, invaded Egypt from the border, and reigned there, and were at length driven out not long before Joseph's time. "So great was the hatred that the figures of shepherds were wrought into the soles of their sandals, that they might tread at least on their effigies." There is a mummy in Paris, having a shepherd bound with cords painted beneath the buskins. But such a separation of Israel from the Egyptians was most important in the Divine plan for preserving them from the contaminations of heathenism; and in the lapse of years they were only too much affected by their idolatrous worship of the calf. *Goshen*, or "Rameses," was "the district of shepherds."

NOTE.—The modern destructive criticism labors to show that the increase of this migrating family could not have reached the numbers given at the exodus,—especially if the period of sojourn in Egypt be counted as two hundred and fifteen years. But (1.) We are to take account of God's covenant promise, which pledged an extraordinary multiplication of this people. (2.) We are to consider that, besides the seventy persons here enumerated genealogically, there were doubtless many

CHAPTER XLVII.

THEN Joseph ^a came and told Pharaoh, and said, My father, and my brethren, and their flocks, and their herds, and all that they have, are come out of the land of Canaan; and behold, they are in ^b the land of Goshen.

a ch. 46: 31. b ch. 45: 10, and 46: 28.

trained servants brought up in the family, and helping to form the aggregate of the nation. Abraham led against the kings no less than three hundred and eighteen of these trained servants; and doubtless a large increase of these must have accrued to the family before the migration. So that there may easily have been a total of seven hundred instead of seventy, who went down to Egypt. Besides (3.) A "mixed multitude" was added to them, probably of captives taken in the after wars of the Pharaohs. Reckoning these items, indeed, it would require only an average increase of population, such as occurs in the United States, to enlarge the whole number of the people at the exodus to two or three millions.

CHAPTER XLVII.

70. JOSEPH INTRODUCES JACOB AND HIS FAMILY TO PHARAOH. PROVISION FOR THE FAMINE.

Joseph, according to his plan (ch. 46: 31), went up to Pharaoh and announced the arrival of his father and the household, along with their flocks and herds, from the land of Canaan; and according to Joseph's instructions Pharaoh's questions about their vocation were answered, in order to the grant of Goshen as their abode. The grant was cordially made. It is plain that Goshen must have been the district best suited to their calling as herdsmen. (Vs. 6.)

1. *Behold.* Joseph announced the immigrants as already in *Goshen*. This was the most eastern border (ch. 46: 28), the district of lower Egypt nearest to Palestine and Arabia, along the Pelusiac and the Tanitic branch of the Nile, and as far as Suez (Ex. 13: 20), consisting partly of rich pasture land, well watered (ch. 46: 34; 47: 4; Deut. 11: 10), and abounding in fish (Numb. 11: 5), containing now more flocks and herds than any other district of Egypt, and yielding the largest revenue.—*Robinson.* *Lepsius* speaks of it as a fruitful country. Yet, as it was a border-land, in the direction of Canaan, and as it was the district which was most liable to invasion, and most recently overrun by raids of the shepherd kings who had dominated over the country not long before, and had been driven into Canaan, it was least attractive to the Egyptians, and such a colony of shepherds might even form a breast-work against such hostile raids. *Herodotus* tells us that almost the whole military force of Egypt was stationed in Lower Egypt. We learn, also, that when the Turks conquered Egypt their Arab confederates were rewarded with this very region, as best suited to a nomadic people. This district was also given to the Bedouins in the French occupation of the country. (*Rosenmuller*, *Alter.* VIII. p. 250.) We infer, also, that the royal herds were pastured in Goshen. It included part of the district of Héliopolis or On, and

2 And he took some of his brethren, *even* five men, and ^c presented them unto Pharaoh.

3 And Pharaoh said unto his brethren, ^d What is your occupation? And they said unto Pharaoh, ^e Thy servants *are* shepherds, both we, *and* also our fathers.

4 They said moreover unto Pharaoh, ^f For to sojourn in the land are we come: for thy servants have no pasture for their flocks, ^g for the famine *is* sore in the land of Canaan: now therefore, we pray thee, let thy servants ^h dwell in the land of Goshen.

5 And Pharaoh spake unto Joseph, saying, Thy father and thy brethren are come unto thee:

6 ⁱ The land of Egypt *is* before thee; in the best of the land make thy father and brethren to dwell; ^k in the land of Goshen let them dwell; and if thou knowest *any* men of activity among them, then make them rulers over my cattle.

^c Acts 7: 13. ^d ch. 46: 33. ^e ch. 46: 34. ^f ch. 15: 13. Deut. 26: 5. ^g ch. 43: 1. Acts 7: 11. ^h ch. 46: 34. ⁱ ch. 20: 15. ^k ver. 4.

stretched eastward. Thus they were located near to Joseph's residence, as Joseph said (ch. 45: 10). It is probable that Goshen extended from the Tanitic branch of the Nile eastward—as the “field of Zoan” (or Tanis) is mentioned as the seat of the Divine achievements in Egypt. (Ps. 78: 12, 43.) *Hengstenberg* argues that *Zoan* was the chief city of Egypt (Numb. 13: 23), and that this was the same as *Tanis*. That the Israelites settled near the royal capital is plain also, from the fact that Moses was exposed on the bank of the Nile (Exod. 2: 3) and at the place where the king's daughter was accustomed to bathe (vs. 5), and the mother of the child lived in the immediate vicinity (vs. 8).

2. *Five men.* The number *five* was a favorite number of the Egyptians, perhaps their sacred number. (Ch. 41: 34; 43: 34; 45: 22; 47: 2.) *Five* was, at any rate, a strong delegation, the rest being left to guard and tend the flocks and herds. This delegation gave the affair an aspect of public and political transaction.

3. Pharaoh inquires about their occupation, and they reply as Joseph instructed them. Though this was the calling most despised among the Egyptians, it would help their application for Goshen as their abode.

4. They do not apply for permanent residence, but only for sojourn in the land. This was asking less of the king, and it was also reserving the right to leave the country when they pleased. They came under the present exigency of famine, and the failure of pasture land, and so they distinctly notified the king. Hence the oppression and injustice of seeking to prevent their exodus. They knew that this was not their home, but that they were to abide here only for a season, according to the Divine plan. Pharaoh could not suppose that they would endanger the safety or peace of the state by the temporary abode that they proposed.

5, 6. Pharaoh now addresses Joseph, his prime-minister, and thus the business takes a formal shape, and the privilege is accorded to them in due process of the court. Pha-

7 And Joseph brought in Jacob his father, and set him before Pharaoh: and Jacob blessed Pharaoh.

8 And Pharaoh said unto Jacob, How old *art* thou?

9 And Jacob said unto Pharaoh, ¹The days of the years of my pilgrimage *are* an hundred and thirty years: ^mfew and evil have the days of the years of my life been, and ^ahave not attained unto the days of the years of the life of my fathers in the days of their pilgrimage.

10 And Jacob ^oblessed Pharaoh, and went out from before Pharaoh.

1 Heb. 11: 9, 13; Ps. 39: 12. m Job 14: 1. n ch. 25: 7, and 35: 23. o ver. 7.

raoh directs Joseph to settle them in the *best of the land—the land of Goshen*, best for their purpose every way. Besides this, he directs him to select from them any whom he might find suitable for head-herdsmen of his own royal cattle. It is probable that Goshen was the pasture land of the king's flocks and herds. Such chief herdsmen were persons of great influence in Oriental households. Besides all this, the king submits the whole matter of their settlement to the discretion of Joseph.

7. It was only after this formal transaction and permission, through the delegation of the five brethren, and in the presence of the prime-minister, that Joseph brings his father Jacob to the king. ¶ *Jacob blessed Pharaoh*. What a touching introduction, too natural and solemn to be an offence. It was warranted by the patriarch's age, by his religion, and by all his antecedents. Besides, he had the consciousness of the Divine leading, and of his call of God to be a blessing to the nations. (Ch. 12: 2.) His blessing was the only return he could make for Pharaoh's kindness. "Silver and gold had he none, but such as he had"—better far than gold—"he gave him." (Acts 3: 6.) "We see here the type of the true relation in which Israel was to stand to heathenism in all their future intercourse."—*Kurtz*.

8. Pharaoh makes the interview

strictly personal, the business having been concluded with the sons. Pharaoh seems to be struck with his aspect of venerable years, and inquires of his age, expressing thus his personal interest.

9. The patriarch calls his life a pilgrimage, and that of his fathers also, because they had not come into actual possession of the land which was theirs by promise, but had been wanderers, in waiting for the day of occupation. (Heb. 11: 13.) ¶ *How old*. Heb.—*What are the days of the years of thy life?* There is great importance in this account of Jacob's age here introduced in so seemingly incidental a manner. "Were it not for the statement here made by Jacob, we should lose the chronological thread of the patriarchal history, and that of the Old Testament in general would thereby be completely destroyed."—*Kurtz*. *The days*, etc. Heb.—*Few and sorrowful are the days of my life's years—and have not reached the days of the life's years of my fathers in the days of their pilgrimage*. Abraham lived to be one hundred and seventy-five and Isaac one hundred and eighty years old, and neither of them had so much toil and trouble. "Man that is born of a woman is of few days" (at utmost) "and full of trouble," at best. (Job 14: 1.) Lit.—*Short of days*.

10. Jacob blessed Pharaoh again at parting, invoking upon him the

11 ¶ And Joseph placed his father and his brethren, and gave them a possession in the land of Egypt, in the best of the land, in the land of ^p Rameses, ^q as Pharaoh had commanded.

12 And Joseph nourished his father, and his brethren, and all his father's household, with bread according to *their* families.

13 ¶ And *there was* no bread in all the land; for the famine *was* very sore, ^r so that the land of Egypt, and *all* the land of Canaan, fainted by reason of the famine.

14 ^s And Joseph gathered up all the money that was found in the land of Egypt, and in the land of Canaan, for the corn which they bought: and Joseph brought the money into Pharaoh's house.

p Ex. 1: 11, and 12: 37. q ver. 6. r ch. 41: 30; Acts 7: 11. s ch. 41: 56.

benediction of Jehovah, and thus confessing his faith before the king.

11. Joseph, according to the royal grant, *placed, located* his father and the household in the land of Goshen, here called *Rameses*, admitted to be the *best of the land for a possession*. This agrees with Exod. 12: 37, and Numb. 33: 3, 5, where *Rameses*, since the departure of the Israelites commences there, is clearly designated as a central point in the land of Goshen.—*Hengstenberg*. “Her-roopolis” was afterwards substituted by the LXX. as the name in their time. It must not be supposed that the number of settlers was strictly seventy. It has been shown how this count was made according to the names of the founders of families and tribes in Israel. But besides these were many trained servants, such as belonged to all the patriarchal encampments. Abraham had three hundred and eighteen. (Ch. 14: 14.) Esau led four hundred. (Ch. 32: 6.)

12. *Joseph nourished his father, as he promised.* (Ch. 45: 11.) Joseph provided the immigrants with bread *according to (their) families*. Heb.—*According to the mouth of little ones*—according to the necessities of each family, counting the very least. (Ch. 50: 21.) OBSERVE. (1.) How

the Lord makes place and time suitable for any crisis which He has appointed. If Egypt must be your country, He will find for you a Goshen. (2.) How our New Testament Joseph, our Elder Brother at court, may be trusted to claim for us at the hands of the world, whatever may be for our good. “The king's heart is in the hands of the Lord, and He turneth it as the rivers of water.”

13. The progress of the famine is now described. *There was no bread in the land*. The stores of grain laid up by private hands were at length exhausted, and resort must now be had to the government supplies laid up by Joseph. The land of Egypt and the land of Canaan *fainted*—*languished*—from the entire failure of food among the people. (Comp. ch. 43: 11 and 47: 4, 13.)

14. The consequence of this exhaustion of private supplies was that the people were obliged to buy grain of Joseph; and thus he soon *gathered up all the money that was found in the land of Egypt, and in the land of Canaan, for the corn which they bought*. Yet Joseph was acting for Pharaoh and not for himself, and he *brought the money (silver) into Pharaoh's house*—that is, *the royal treasury*.

15 And when money failed in the land of Egypt, and in the land of Canaan, all the Egyptians came unto Joseph, and said, Give us bread: for 'why should we die in thy presence? for the money faileth.

16 And Joseph said, Give your cattle; and I will give you for your cattle, if money fail.

17 And they brought their cattle unto Joseph: and Joseph gave them bread *in exchange* for horses, and for the flocks, and for the cattle of the herds, and for the asses; and he fed them with bread, for all their cattle, for that year.

18 When that year was ended, they came unto him the second year, and said unto him, We will not hide *it* from my lord, how that our money is spent; my lord also hath our herds of cattle: there is not aught left in the sight of my lord, but our bodies and our lands:

19 Wherefore shall we die before thine eyes, both we and our land? buy us and our land for bread, and we and our land will be servants unto Pharaoh: and give *us* seed, that we may live, and not die, that the land be not desolate.

t ver. 19.

15-17. At length, the money being spent in both lands, all the Egyptians came to Joseph, begging for a supply from the public stores. Joseph had doubtless first bought grain of them during the years of plenty, and they had sold to him and to others instead of laying up in store against the time of famine. Much of the wealth of the Egyptians came from the sale of corn. As this source of income had now been closed for some time, the money was soon spent in buying it from the government. *Aristotle* informs us that an attempt to prohibit the exportation of corn rendered the payment of the public taxes impossible. But now they must have food, and they have nothing to buy with. Death threatens them, and their case is desperate. ¶ *Cattle*. Joseph now proposes to take their cattle in pay for corn. And this was really a favor; for they could no longer feed their cattle, and this was the only way in which either man or beast could be preserved

alive. This plan will save both. "O Lord, thou preservest man and beast!" ¶ *He fed them*. They accepted this proposal, and *Joseph fed (maintained) them with bread in exchange for all their cattle for that year*.

18, 19. *When that year was ended they came unto him the second year*—the year after this—and proposed to give themselves into servitude, and to part with control of their lands in exchange for food. They must have bread or starve. He had their money and their cattle, and now nothing remained but this last resort—that *we may be—we and our land—servants to Pharaoh—vassals*; still expecting to hold their lands under Pharaoh. Some suppose that the people's stores and their money, which had accumulated during the years of plenty, had lasted for five years of famine, and that here we have the account of their extremity in the sixth and seventh years. Hence they asked now, at the last, for *seed*, believing Joseph's prediction that the

20 And Joseph bought all the land of Egypt for Pharaoh; for the Egyptians sold every man his field, because the famine prevailed over them: so the land became Pharaoh's.

21 And as for the people, he removed them to cities from *one* end of the borders of Egypt even to the *other* end thereof.

period for the famine was now about to expire. ¶ *And give seed.* They are willing to give up all for a year's provision and a supply of seed by which they might plant the soil, and *that the land be not desolate*, as it must be if no further planting were done.

20. The lands and people of Egypt thus became subject to the king. This state of things brought about a great social revolution. When he says, I have *bought you*, the term means, I have *acquired you*. And nothing is said in the law about personal servitude, only about a fixed income tax. "They do not become Pharaoh's bondmen. They own their lands under him by a new tenure. They are no longer subject to arbitrary exactions, but have a fixed rent."—*Murphy*. In reality it involved the liberty of law and protection and governmental support. Joseph has been censured for this arrangement as arbitrary and cruel, taking advantage of the people's straits to pamper a despotic throne. But, on the other hand, he has been credited by the wisest publicists as striking out a course of high public policy, which it has been found most wise to imitate. During the last famine in Ireland, this was the aim of the British government, to devise work for the people by which they could render some service for the food apportioned to them. To have made this a royal grant without any consideration of labor, would have been to encourage idleness and endanger the public peace. The policy of Joseph promoted industry and loyalty. Such a partition of the land is

ascribed by *Herodotus* to *King Sesostris*, who is a mythical personage—the great oracle of ancient time, who is referred to as originating all important measures; and, according to *Lepsius*, he was the Pharaoh of Joseph's time. The demand of a fifth of the produce for the crown was a small tax where the yield was commonly thirty fold. The people were to have a new distribution of the lands and cultivate them only under this rent, (vs. 21.) To this day, the same principle is pursued. When we were in Egypt there was a grand rejoicing of the people on occasion of the public announcement that the rent, which had lately been very burdensome, had been slightly reduced. The taxes levied by the modern government of Egypt have reached as high as seventy per cent. In Syria the tax imposed by the Turkish authorities is twenty-five per cent.

21. *The people he removed to the cities*—from the country. Lit.—*According to the cities*. Thus he distributed the population of the land in and around the cities *according to the cities* in which the grain was stored, so as to promote the easiest distribution of the supplies among them. (Ch. 41. 48.) This plan would tend to carry out better the proposal of the people to put their lands entirely in the control of the crown, while yet they should cultivate them. An allowance to remain on their own lands would have interfered with the great object of creating a new tenure of the soil under a guaranty of support. This scheme also throws light upon the fact that "there were twenty thousand cities and towns in

22 ^v Only the land of the priests bought he not ; for the priests had a portion *assigned them* of Pharaoh, and did eat their portion which Pharaoh gave them ; wherefore they sold not their lands.

23 Then Joseph said unto the people, Behold, I have bought you this day and your land for Pharaoh : lo, *here is* seed for you, and ye shall sow the land.

24 And it shall come to pass in the increase that ye shall give the fifth *part* unto Pharaoh, and four parts shall be your own, for seed of the field, and for your food, and for them of your households, and for food for your little ones.

v Ezra 7 : 24.

Egypt. And Herodotus has it that Sesostris, the king, divided all Egypt, giving to each person a portion of the land, for which a stated rent was to be paid."

22. *Only the land of the priests he did not buy.* The Egyptian priesthood of heathen idolatry was already placed by Pharaoh upon an independent and separate basis. *Wilkinson* shows from the monuments that only the kings and priests and the military (who held lands of the king) are represented as land-owners. *Heeren* finds in his researches "that a greater, perhaps the greatest and best, part of the land was in possession of the priests." OBSERVE.—This history preshadows the Mosaic constitution by which the Israelites were bound to pay a fifth (double tenth) of the produce of their land in Canaan, for they were only farmers of the soil—tenants under God—at a fixed rent, and so they could not alienate the property permanently. (Lev. 25: 23.) It was an act of great liberality, and it seems to have been based on preëxisting customs. (Ch. 41: 34.) *Herodotus* remarks, "The soldiers alone, *besides the priests*, receive a salary from the king. Now, since the land of the priests was their own property, their salary could consist only of the portion of the produce given them." This fact goes to show that Moses,

the author of the Jewish system was of Egyptian antecedents and familiar with the usages in Egypt ; "since it was natural that he and no lawgiver of more modern times should have regard to the Egyptian institutions in framing his laws." OBSERVE.—"Joseph's measures exhibit, in type, how God entrusts His servants with the good things of this world, in order that they may use them not only for the preservation of the lives of individuals and of nations, but also for the promotion of the purposes of His kingdom."—*Keil*.

23, 24. The sense in which Joseph had bought or acquired the people for Pharaoh is now explained. They were bound to the king in one-fifth of their annual crops and produce, and four-fifths were secured to them. There was no severity about this in the view of the people, who best understood the facts and could far better than modern cavillers pronounce a fair opinion. This great public measure had saved them and their households from starvation, and would provide them securities for the future. They were thus guaranteed against any arbitrary exaction. In any event they should have only this tax of a fifth to pay. Taxes paid to a government do not make a people slaves. It is the price which a free people may and do fairly pay for their civil rights—for the protec-

25 And they said, Thou hast saved our lives : ^x let us find grace in the sight of my lord, and we will be Pharaoh's servants.

26 And Joseph made it a law over the land of Egypt unto this day *that* Pharaoh should have the fifth *part* ; ^y except the land of the priests only, *which* became not Pharaoh's.

27 ¶ And Israel ^z dwelt in the land of Egypt, in the country of Goshen ; and they had possession therein, and ^a grew and multiplied exceedingly.

28 And Jacob lived in the land of Egypt seventeen years ; so the whole age of Jacob was an hundred forty and seven years.

29 And the time ^b drew nigh that Israel must die : and he called his son Joseph, and said unto him, If now I have found grace in thy sight, ^c put, I pray thee, thine hand under my thigh, and ^d deal kindly and truly with me ; ^e bury me not, I pray thee, in Egypt :

30 But ^f I will lie with my fathers, and thou shalt carry me out of Egypt, and ^g bury me in their burying-place. And he said, I will do as thou hast said.

31 And he said, Swear unto me : and he sware unto him. And ^h Israel bowed himself upon the bed's head.

^x ch. 33 : 15. ^y ver. 22. ^z ver. 11. ^a ch. 46 : 3. ^b Deut. 31 : 14 ; 1 Kings 2 : 1. ^c ch. 24 : 2. ^d ch. 24 : 49. ^e ch. 50 : 25. ^f 2 Sam. 19 : 27. ^g ch. 49 : 29, and 50 : 5, 13. ^h ch. 48 : 2 ; 1 Kings 1 : 47 ; Heb. 11 : 21.

tion and support which they derive from the government. What would land or property or labor be worth without public authority and fixed laws ?

25. This is the people's verdict in favor of Joseph's policy. They render willing service to the king and desire his favor. Instead of this, there surely would have been sore complaint if the measure had been tyrannical, as modern skeptics would labor to prove.

27. This policy of Joseph also secured the quiet residence of the Israelites in Egypt without severe privations, or such relations of dependence on Pharaoh as might else have occurred. ¶ *And they had possessions therein*—they became proprietors of the soil in Goshen ; or at least enjoyed all their freedom by a firm tenure. They established themselves there, (ch. 34 : 10,) and *they grew and multiplied exceedingly*. God

bleses them with increase and prosperity according to His promise to make of them there a great nation.

28. Here is introduced the preface to a new section. Jacob comes to his last illness and gives utterance to his dying wishes. He had now sojourned in Egypt seventeen years, about as long as Joseph had lived before his coming to Egypt as a slave. He was now nearly a century and a half old. Joseph has been fourteen years in the high office of superintending and distributing the public stores—a year longer than he had spent there as a slave. And he retains his position at the court after the special public trust has been fulfilled by the close of the period of famine.

29–31. The aged patriarch now requests, of his exalted son, one last service—to bury him not in Egypt, but in Canaan ; not in the land of his exile and sojourn, but in the

CHAPTER XLVIII.

AND it came to pass after these things, that *one* told Joseph, Behold, thy father *is* sick : and he took with him his two sons, Manasseh and Ephraim.

covenant land, which he held by Divine grant as a patrimony for his seed in future generations. ¶ *Under my thigh—hip.* (See note on ch. 24 : 2.) This is called the bodily oath. It refers expressly to the Divine covenant in its promise of a seed, and so it refers the son to all the high and honorable hopes of his house, (as in Isaac's marriage, ch. 24 : 2,) and to the covenant sacrament of circumcision enforcing the same idea. It was as much as to say, "As you value our family name and heritage as the chosen of God, and as you revere and cherish the household covenant with all its hopes—*swear.*" He exacted an oath that Joseph might not be kept back from leaving the kingdom and might plead this obligation. (Ch. 50 : 5, 6.) *And Joseph sware to him.* ¶ *And Israel.* Here the name is *Israel*—most appropriately showing the solemn covenant transaction, in which the patriarch expressed his ancient faith and his firm hope, and handed over the covenant guarantees to his household, asking that his bones might surely be buried in the land where he firmly expected that his house should reside, as the title was granted to him and them in perpetuity. ¶ *Bowed himself upon the head of his bed.* "He turns towards the head of the bed and assumes the posture of adoration, rendering, no doubt, thanks to God for all the mercies of his past life, and for this closing token of filial duty and affection."—*Murphy.* *Kalisch* reads, "*He reclined upon the head of the bed.*" (See 1 Kings 1 :

47, 48, where David did the same.) The Sept. (Gr.) version has the reading, "*worshipped (leaning) on the top of his staff,*" which Paul quotes, not as indorsing this clause of the version, but because it was the translation commonly in use, and he had no motive to correct it then. (Heb. 11 : 21.) But this rendering has probably sprung from a false reading as to a vowel point in the Hebrew. And the sense would be poor, unless we think of the staff with which he had "crossed this Jordan," as he said when he referred to it in recounting to Esau his after posterity, (ch. 32 : 10,) though even "the top of his staff" is a strange expression, which Romanists have aimed to pervert into an apology for image worship. *Jamieson* favors the Septuagint reading on the ground that "the Oriental beds are mere mats, having no head." But the Oriental couch or divan has a pillow ; and there is, at least, a head of the bed, where the head of the sleeper reclines. "He had talked with Joseph while sitting upon the bed. (Ch. 48 : 2.) So that when Joseph had promised to fulfil his wish, he turned towards the head of the bed, so as to lie with his face upon the bed, (same term as in ch. 48 : 2 and 49 : 33,) and thus worshipped God, thanking him for granting his wish, which sprang from living faith in the promises of God."—*Keil.* *Candlish* says, "It was *pilgrim-worship*" (*upon the top of his staff.*) (Exod. 12 : 11. See Psalm 23 : 4.)

2 And *one* told Jacob, and said, Behold, thy son Joseph cometh unto thee : and Israel strengthened himself, and sat upon the bed.

3 And Jacob said unto Joseph, God Almighty appeared unto me at ^a Luz in the land of Canaan, and blessed me,

a ch. 28 : 13, 19, and 35 : 6, 9, etc.

CHAPTER XLVIII.

§ 71. JACOB'S LAST ILLNESS. HE BLESSES HIS ADOPTED SONS, EPHRAIM AND MANASSEH.

The aged patriarch, coming now to die, adopts the two sons of Joseph, who had been born in Egypt prior to the family settlement there. He gives to them each a son's portion in Canaan, and equal authority and privilege with his own sons, but he is particular in assigning to Ephraim the younger the preference, as to be more prominent in position and the head of a more powerful tribe. Joseph's other sons, if any, born after the family immigration, should be merged into the families of these two elder brothers.

The birthright interest is now in part to be transferred from Reuben, who had forfeited it, to Joseph, who was the noblest product of the family life. In Egypt, too, Joseph had realized the relation of Israel to the heathen world, and had proved a savior. He was thus far a type of the New Testament Joseph, and in him was hinted what the blessing should be to all the nations of the earth through the covenant people. (See ch. 49 : 3, 4.) *Kalisch* denies that the right of primogeniture was held by any of the sons, as a standing and permanent dignity, but admits that Reuben had held the priority of position till he lost it by his own shameful conduct.

1. *After these things*—when Jacob's arrangements for his burial had been made—it was told to Joseph

—(Heb.—*one said*) that his father was taken ill. Accordingly, Joseph went up to his father, taking with him his two sons, Manasseh and Ephraim, that so the utmost attention and respect might be paid by his family to the aged patriarch, and that these children by their Egyptian birth, should not be excluded from the hopes and heritage of the covenant. These sons are supposed to have been eighteen or twenty years old.

2. As soon as it was told to Jacob that Joseph was coming, he *strengthened himself*—gathered up his strength—summoned all his flagging powers in an effort to *sit up upon the bed*. *Israel* is now the name instead of Jacob, for here a solemn covenant transaction takes place, and the covenant name is given him. This is on the same principle as the changes we find by the historian in the names of God. Who would ever pretend that this use of *Israel* instead of Jacob indicates a different authorship?

3. Jacob now refers to a leading point in the covenant history as warranting this transaction. Besides, God's appearing to him at Luz, or Bethel, is here introduced to show to Joseph the covenant ground on which he bases all his family hopes, and to inspire him with the same confidence. (See ch. 35 : 10, 11, and compare ch. 28 : 13.) He refers to the promise of a numerous posterity, and to the promise of the Holy Land, *for an everlasting possession*. These are large terms, and indicate a meaning beyond the long term of years during which the Jews

4 And said unto me, Behold, I will make thee fruitful and multiply thee, and I will make of thee a multitude of people; and will give this land to thy seed after thee, ^b *for* an everlasting possession.

5 ¶ And now, thy ^c two sons, Ephraim and Manasseh, which were born unto thee in the land of Egypt, before I came unto thee into Egypt, *are* mine: as Reuben and Simeon, they shall be mine.

6 And thine issue, which thou begetteth after them, shall be thine, *and* shall be called after the name of their brethren in their inheritance.

7 And as for me, when I came from Padan, ^d Rachel died by me in the land of Canaan, in the way, when yet *there was* but a little way to come unto Ephrath: and I buried her there in the way of Ephrath, the same *is* Bethlehem.

b ch. 17: 8. c ch. 41: 50, and 46: 20; Josh. 13: 7, and 14: 4. d ch. 35: 9, 16, 19.

have inhabited Palestine. The future of that land stands somehow vested in Israel. Joseph was in a measure lost to Jacob, by becoming a naturalized Egyptian. The deficiency could only thus be supplied.

5. *And now thy two sons.*—Ephraim and Manasseh who had been born to Joseph in Egypt, before the family migration, were now to be recognized and adopted as the sons of Jacob in the stead of Reuben and Simeon. The grounds of this procedure are stated in 1 Chron. 5: 1, 2. In this way, also, two shares of the heritage would fall to Joseph, “the first-born of her who was intended by Jacob to be his first and only wife.” ¶ *Are mine.* He claims them, but it is for his benediction. This is no hardship. Ephraim should succeed to the birthright in the place of Reuben. (Ch. 35: 22; 49: 3, 4; 1 Chron. 5: 1, 2.) Manasseh should take the place of Simeon, (ch. 34: ch. 49: 5–7,) the next in order of birth. (See Numb. 26: 28–37; 1 Chron. 7: 14–29.)

6. But this privilege was to be confined to these two first-born sons of Joseph. The after issue *shall be*

thine. How blessed the distinction when God claims us to be his. “Ye are bought with a price.” “Ye are not your own.” Alas! for those who revolt at this, and claim to be their own. Joseph’s younger sons (none are mentioned) were to be merged into their brothers’ families, and *called after their name.* They should be regarded as belonging to their brothers’ tribes, and have no tribal name of their own.

7. His thoughts now pass to Rachel, the beloved mother of Joseph, and he speaks of her death which makes his own more desirable, and his burial in the same land of promise more natural and necessary to his peace of mind. This adoption of Joseph’s sons honors his sainted mother. ¶ *Padan.* Here alone used for Padan-Aram. *Rachel died by me.* רַחֵלָּה. Heb. — *Upon me* (as a grievous affliction,) or, *by my side.* ¶ *Buried her when there was yet but a little way to come to Ephrath, or Bethlehem.* The tomb of Rachel (a white Mohammedan Wely), called by the name of *Rahil*, is by the road side near Bethlehem. How this fond mother would have

8 And Israel beheld Joseph's sons, and said, *Who are these ?*

9 And Joseph said unto his father, ^e *They are my sons, whom God hath given me in this place.* And he said, Bring them, I pray thee, unto me, and ^f *I will bless them.*

10 (Now ^g the eyes of Israel were dim for age, *so that* he could not see :) and he brought them near unto him ; and ^h he kissed them, and embraced them.

11 And Israel said unto Joseph, ⁱ *I had not thought to see thy face : and lo, God hath shewed me also thy seed.*

12 And Joseph brought them out from between his knees, and he bowed himself with his face to the earth.

13 And Joseph took them both, Ephraim in his right hand toward Israel's left hand, and Manasseh in his left hand toward Israel's right hand, and brought *them* near unto him.

14 And Israel stretched out his right hand, and laid *it* upon Ephraim's head, who *was* the younger, and his left hand upon Manasseh's head, ^k guiding his hands wittingly ; for Manasseh *was* the first-born.

e ch. 33 : 5. f ch. 27 : 4. g ch. 27 : 1. h. ch. 27 : 27. i ch. 45 : 26. k ver. 19.

rejoiced to see her beloved son exalted to this position of a first-born in the household, and to the high position also of a savior to the whole house of Israel, as well as to the great kingdom of the heathen world. Faithful mothers may trust their sons with God. But blessed are the sons who are like Joseph, faithful to their parents and to God from their youth. They are sure of attaining renown hereafter, if not here. The mother's grave is so definitely described, in order to have its sanctity guarded by Joseph.

8-10. Jacob now noticed the two sons of Joseph, without being able to recognize them on account of his dim eyesight, (vs. 10,) and he asked, *Who are these ?* The patriarch, on learning that these were the two sons of whom he had just now spoken, directs him to bring them forward for his blessing. "He may not have seen the youths for some years, and so may less easily have recognized them at first." ¶ *He kissed them and embraced them.* How much better

was this than all that Jacob had ever expected to see ! Though he had given up all hope of seeing Joseph's face again on earth, he is here privileged to see him and his seed also.

13. *From between his knees*—Jacob's. They were in his embrace between his knees as he sat upon the bed. Joseph, in order to prepare them for the solemnity, brought them out from between Jacob's knees, having bowed himself with his face to the earth, before the face of Jacob. And now he presents them to his aged father, in the position of their age as expecting the elder to receive the right hand blessing. He brings Manasseh in his left to his father's right, and Ephraim in his right to his father's left.

14. Israel now oversteps all considerations of age, and lays his paternal covenant right hand upon the head of the younger, and his left hand upon the head of the elder, and blesses them. Joseph interfered as if the father had mistaken, (vs. 17,) but it was designed by Him

15 ¶ And ¹ he blessed Joseph, and said, God, ^m before whom my fathers Abraham and Isaac did walk, the God which fed me all my life long unto this day,

16 The angel ⁿ which redeemed me from all evil, bless the lads; and let ^o my name be named on them, and the name of my fathers Abraham and Isaac: and let them grow into a multitude in the midst of the earth.

¹ Heb. 11 : 21. ^m ch. 17 : 1, and 24 : 40. ⁿ ch. 28 : 15, and 31 : 11, 13, 24. Ps. 34 : 22, and 121 : 7. ^o Amos 9 : 12. Acts 15 : 17.

who guided his hands—*guiding his hands wittingly*—laying on his hands advisedly, *intentionally* crossing his arms for this very purpose. The Sept., Vulg., Targ., Syr. read, *Changing his hands purposely. Laying on the hand* is here for the first time mentioned in the Scriptures. It is a natural sign of conveying some good, official or personal, spiritual or temporal, “a supersensual power or gift,” as in setting apart to an office, transferring or conveying the dignity or authority. (Numb. 27 : 18, 23; Deut. 34 : 9; Matt. 19 : 13; Acts 6 : 6; 8 : 17, etc. So it occurs in connection with sacrifices, transferring symbolically the guiltiness; and in cures wrought by Christ and the apostles, significant of conveying the grace of healing. So in the official investitures under the New Testament church. (1 Tim. 5 : 22; 2 Tim. 1 : 6; see 1 Tim. 4 : 14.) By this imposition of hands Jacob indicates the solemn, formal, official conveyance to Joseph’s sons of the primogeniture in the covenant household. The apostle Paul (Heb. 11 : 21) instances this blessing of Joseph’s sons, as the most notable and special instance of Jacob’s faith in all his history.

15. Jacob *blessed Joseph*, in his sons. He refers to God as the God of the Covenant—the *God before whom my fathers Abraham and Isaac did walk—the God which fed me*, as a shepherd leads and feeds his flock

—*shepherded me*—“*who was my shepherd.*”—Kalisch. (Ps. 23 : 1; 28 : 9.)

16. *The Angel which redeemed me*, etc. This Angel, being here made equal with God, is the Covenant Angel—the Redeemer—(*the Angel of His presence*, Isa. 63 : 9.) There is, therefore, here a threefold reference to God,—God as God, God as Shepherd, (leading and feeding,) and God as Angel, Redeemer,—and it conveys a reference to the Trinity. The Covenant Angel, who redeemed the patriarch from all the evils of his way, is invoked to *bless the lads*. The verb is here in the singular. The three Persons are one God. How the parent is blessed in a blessing on his sons! Though Joseph’s house was to be reared in Egypt, Jacob would have these sons to be the binding link with the covenant household, and would not have the sacred heritage forgotten nor lost. ¶ *Let my name be named upon them.* This relates not merely to their bearing the ancestral name as adopted sons. It is the covenant relation which is here expressed; the name of Abraham and Isaac is to be called upon them; they are baptized into the covenant name. “The true nature of the patriarchs shall be discerned and acknowledged in Ephraim and Manasseh; in them shall those blessings of grace and salvation be renewed which Jacob and his fathers Abraham and Isaac received from God.” ¶ *And*

17 And when Joseph saw that his father ^p laid his right hand upon the head of Ephraim, it displeased him: and he held up his father's hand, to remove it from Ephraim's head unto Manasseh's head.

18 And Joseph said unto his father, Not so, my father: for this is the first-born; put thy right hand upon his head.

19 And his father refused, and said, ^q I know *it*, my son, I know *it*: he also shall become a people, and he also shall be great: but truly ^r his younger brother shall be greater than he, and his seed shall become a multitude of nations.

20 And he blessed them that day, saying, ^s In thee shall Israel bless, saying, God make thee as Ephraim and as Manasseh: and he set Ephraim before Manasseh.

21 And Israel said unto Joseph, Behold, I die; but ^t God

^p ver. 14. ^q ver. 14. ^r Numb. 1: 33, 35, and 2: 19: 21; Deut. 33: 17; Rev. 7: 6, 8. ^s Ruth 4: 11, 12. ^t ch. 46: 4, and 50: 24.

let them grow into a multitude. This was the leading idea in the covenant promise,—the numerous offspring, and then the promised land. The verb here meaning *to multiply* is connected with the noun meaning *fish*, from the rapid multiplication of fishes. The posterity of the sons amounted to 85,200 souls in the time of Moses. (Deut. 33: 17; Numb. 1: 33; 2: 19.) Joseph's interference at the first is now recorded.

17–19. When Joseph saw how his father crossed his hands so that the right hand rested upon the younger son, contrary to what could be expected in the order of nature, *it was evil in his eyes.* He lifted up his father's hand to remove it from the one to the other, giving his reasons, (vs. 18.) ¶ *His father refused.* He had not less vision, but greater. He had dim eyesight, but vivid spiritual insight and foresight, given him of God for the occasion. “The blessing began to be fulfilled from the time of the Judges, when the tribe of Ephraim so increased in extent and power that it took the lead of all the northern tribes, and became the head of the ten tribes, and its name

acquired equal to Israel, whereas, under Moses, Manasseh had numbered 20,000 more than Ephraim.” (Numb. 26: 34, 37.) ¶ *A multitude of nations.* Heb.—*The fulness of nations.* “Ephraim” came to designate the northern kingdom of the ten tribes, as Judah, the southern, designated the rest.

20. Here the blessing is more formally expressed in substance. ¶ *In thee (Joseph) will Israel (as a nation) bless, saying.* Joseph shall be so blessed in his two sons, and their prosperity shall be so noted, as that their blessing shall become a standing form of benediction in Israel. “God make them as Ephraim and Manasseh.” The blessing was not merely a pious wish, nor a confident hope, but the actual bestowing of a blessing,” by virtue of the Divine warrant. “These words,” says *Rabbi Raphall*, “still form the benediction with which every parent in Israel blesses his child.” (Ruth 4: 11, 12.) Jacob blessed Joseph in his two sons. (Vs. 15.)

21. The patriarch was now ready to die. ¶ *I die*—am about to die. I shall be taken from you; but *God shall be*

shall be with you, and bring you again unto the land of your fathers.

22 Moreover ^v I have given to thee one portion above thy brethren, which I took out of the hand ^x of the Amorite with my sword and with my bow.

CHAPTER XLIX.

AND Jacob called unto his sons, and said, Gather yourselves together, that I may ^a tell you *that* which shall befall you ^b in the last days.

2 Gather yourselves together, and hear, ye sons of Jacob; and ^c hearken unto Israel your father.

^v Josh. 24 : 32; 1 Chron. 5 : 2; John 4 : 5. ^x ch. 15 : 16, and 34 : 28; Josh. 17 : 14. etc.
^a Deut. 33 : 1; Amos 3 : 7. ^b Deut. 4 : 39; Numb. 24 : 14; Isa. 2 : 2, and 39 : 6; Jer. 23 : 20, Dan. 2 : 28, 29; Acts 2 : 17; Heb. 1 : 2. ^c Ps. 34 : 11.

with you. This is the precious legacy of pious parents to their children—the covenant presence of their father's God. The point of all this was the important assurance upon which the patriarch's faith fixed, that God would bring them again unto the land of their fathers. Nothing was said about the intervening years of bondage, but only about the issue and result of all. If all is well at last, if we have Divine assurance of being brought safely home, this will stay us in our afflictions, and bear us up in the house of our bondage.

22. *One portion.* He now bestows on Joseph one share or portion of the promised land above his brethren. ¶ *Which I took.* *Murphy* takes the view that this refers to the sacking of Shechem by his sons. (Ch. 34.) But this was without his approval, and for this he denounced his sons; and how, then, could he claim to have done this "by his sword and his bow"—himself? It could not refer to the purchase of Shechem, (ch. 33 : 19,) which is not a conquest by arms. Indeed, the patriarch's time had not yet come for taking forced possession of the land. The terms, therefore, are prophetic, and look to

the future conquest as if it were already accomplished, thus evincing his firm faith in the result; meaning that he would wrest the land from the Amorites, (when their iniquity was full, ch. 15 : 16,) in the person of his posterity, as the land was to be his in his descendants. So *Delitzsch*, *Baumgarten*, and others. Thus the language is in keeping with the prophetic blessings which follow. (Comp. ch. 49 : 28.) Jacob calls this excess of inheritance for Joseph, *Shechem*, (Lit.—*shoulder*—portion—*neck, ridge*,) "because he regarded the piece of land purchased at Shechem as a pledge of the future possession of the whole land," "and there the bones of Joseph were buried after the conquest of Canaan (Josh. 24 : 32;) and this was afterwards regarded as a gift of the ground to Joseph."—*Keil*. (John 4 : 5.) *Bush* takes it as referring to a conquest not mentioned in the history, but as already past. In the book of Joshua it appears that the descendants of Joseph claimed the double portion, and it was granted to them as their right. (Josh. 17 : 14–18. Comp. ch. 14 : 4.) The birthright was Joseph's, as we learn from 1 Chron. 5 : 2.

3 ¶ Reuben, thou art ^d my first-born, my might, ^e and the be-

d ch. 29: 32. e Deut. 21: 17; Ps. 78: 51.

CHAPTER XLIX.

§ 72. JACOB'S BLESSING UPON HIS TWELVE SONS. FURTHER MESSIANIC PROMISE IN THE LINE OF JUDAH. JACOB'S DEATH.

Jacob now calls together his sons to make known to them his dying will, and to indicate to them, by the spirit of prophecy, their several relations under the covenant. This is in the form of a poem—the first in the inspired records, (if we except only a passage, ch. 4: 23, 24.) Some persons have objected that persons of Jacob's advanced age are not found to write poetry, and that it would be impossible to transmit it, word for word, down to the time of Moses. But the celebrated Arabic poem (*the Moallakat*) is referred to in answer, written at 135 years of age, and its transmission through many generations proves the possibility. But Inspiration surely provides the historian against natural forgetfulness. See *Hengstenberg*, Vol. I. p. 76,) *Christology*. *Kalisch* refers to an alleged ability of dying persons to pry into the future, and appeals to *heathen* authorities. It would be a heathen view to take of Jacob's prophetic gift. Besides, this is not supposed to be a merely natural effusion, but a supernatural one. Every attack upon the genuineness of this prophetic passage has really proceeded from an *a priori* denial of all supernatural prophecies, and has been sustained by the introduction of such special historical allusions as might make it to be based on the event.

1. *Gather yourselves together*. This was the formal patriarchal summons sent out to the sons to convene

them for the solemn purpose mentioned—that *I may tell you that which shall befall you in the end of the days*, or in the last days. This phrase—"the last days," is often used to denote the Messianic times. (See Isaiah 2: 2; Ezek. 38: 8, 16; Jer. 30: 24, etc.) This passage reaches to that period, in the Shiloh. And it embraces the intervening history—"the whole history of the completion which underlies the present period of growth." *Faber* reads, *the afterhood of days*. Thus the passage is designated as a *prophecy*, while it is also called a *blessing*, (vs. 28.) Jacob looks forward in faith to the fulfilment of the Divine promise made to him at his entrance into Canaan, embracing the land and the seed. He sees already, in prophetic spirit, the large increase of his sons into powerful tribes, and also the occupancy of the land of Canaan. And now he foretells to them their relative prosperity and advancement in the covenant land, and their relations to each other and to the surrounding nations, even to the time of their final subjection to the peaceful sway of Him from whom the sceptre of Judah should not depart. (See *Keil* and *Delitzsch*.) According to this view, the eye of the patriarch surveys the prospect from the first foundation of Israel as the nation and kingdom of God till its completion under the rule of the Prince of Peace, whom the nations would serve in willing obedience.

2. The summons is repeated to draw near and listen, now that they are present before him. They are called "*sons of Jacob*;" and this is their natural relation. They are to listen to *Israel their father*. This is their covenant relation.

3. *Reuben—my first-born thou*. He

ginning of my strength, the excellency of dignity, and the excellency of power :

4 Unstable as water, ^fthou shalt not excel: because thou ^gwentest up to thy father's bed; then defiledst thou *it*: he went up to my couch.

5 ¶ ^hSimeon and Levi *are* ⁱbrethren; ^kinstruments of cruelty *are* in their habitations.

6 O my soul, ^lcome not thou into their secret; ^munto their assembly, ⁿmine honor, be not thou united: ^oin their anger they slew a man, and in their self-will they digged down a wall.

f 1 Chron. 5: 1. g ch. 35: 22; 1 Chron. 5: 1; Deut. 27: 20. h ch. 29: 33, 34. i Prov. 18: 9. k ch. 34: 25. l Prov. 1: 15, 16. m Ps. 26: 9; Eph. 5: 11. n Ps. 16: 9; and 30: 12; and 57: 8. o ch. 34: 26.

is here recognized as *the first-born*.—According to natural right he was entitled to the first rank among his brethren, the leadership of the tribes and the double share of the inheritance. (Ch. 27: 29. Deut. 21: 17.) ¶ *My might*. As first-born he was the first fruit of his manly strength—and *the firstling of my vigor*. *The excellency of dignity—superiority of rank,—elevation—pre-eminence of the dignity of the chieftainship. The excellency of power—pre-eminence of authority—(of the first-born.)* This was Reuben's position as first-born; but he had forfeited it by his crime alluded to in the next verse.

4. *Unstable as water*. Lit.—*Efferescence—(boiling over) as water*—referring to the heated passions which had disgraced him—*thou shalt not excel*—thou shalt not have pre-eminence,—such as would have been his in the birthright supremacy. The double portion was transferred to Joseph—the chieftainship to Judah—and the priesthood to Levi. (See vs. 5-7, 8-12: 1 Chron. 5: 1, 2.) Reuben's tribe thus attained to no position in the national history. (See Deut. 33: 6.) This, however, was not according to the arbitrary will of the father, transferring the birthright from the first-born of the less-beloved to that of the more-favored wife—which was forbidden, (Deut. 21: 15,)—but it

was according to the Divine leading by which Joseph had been raised above his brethren, yet without having the chieftainship granted to him. The ground of Reuben's sentence is now stated. ¶ *Because*—His crime was lying with his father's concubine Bilhah. (Ch. 35: 22.) ¶ *Then defiledst thou*—"Desecrated hast thou what should have been sacred to thee." The injured father then expresses himself in a kind of appeal to the sympathies of all. ¶ *To my couch he went up*. Yet the sentence pronounced here upon Reuben retains to him the blessing of a tribe's share in the promised land. It was on the east of the Jordan. No judge, prophet, nor ruler sprang from this tribe.

5. *Simeon and Levi are brethren*.—not only in descent, but in sympathy and co-operation. ¶ *Instruments, etc. Weapons of wickedness are their swords*. So the margin. Others read—*are their plans*; but *plans* are not *weapons*. Reference is had to the cruelty of these brothers against the Shechemites. (Ch 35: 25.) Kalisch reads, "*An instrument of violence is their burning rage.*"

6. Jacob deprecates any communion with such counsels of cruelty. *Into their counsel come thou not, O my soul; with their assembly let not mine honor be united*—referring to their

7 Cursed *be* their anger, for *it was* fierce : and their wrath, for it was cruel : ^p I will divide them in Jacob, and scatter them in Israel.

8 ¶ ^a Judah, thou *art he* whom thy brethren shall praise ;

p Josh. 19 : 1 ; and 21 : 5, 6, 7 ; 1 Chron. 4 : 24, 39. q ch. 29 : 35 ; Deut. 33 : 7.

bloody plot for the destruction of the Shechemites. *Mine honor* (glory) “ of the soul as the noblest part of man, the centre of his personality as the image of God.” (So Ps. 16 : 9.) ¶ *For.* The criminality is now mentioned. In their wrath (revenge) have they slain (a man) men, and in their wantonness they have houghed (an ox) oxen. So the Septuagint (Greek) version. Our version reads, the last clause, *have digged down a wall.* So Turner reads, “ they destroyed a city.” The Chaldee, Syriac, and Vulgate versions favor this. The true rendering refers to a process of wantonly cutting the tendons of oxen so as to make them useless—and out of a mere wicked, fierce revenge. The tendon thus severed could never be healed. (See Josh. 11 : 6, 9 ; 2 Sam. 8 : 4.) The nouns are in the singular, as giving instances of their ferocious conduct. In ch. 34 : 28, the carrying off of the cattle is mentioned. This wanton cruelty was doubtless added.

7. Jacob now pronounces a curse upon their bloody revenge, on account of its fierceness and cruelty. ¶ *I will divide them in Jacob*, etc. And as they had joined together in this wicked work, Jacob decrees their separation and scatterment, so as to form no independent nor compacted tribes. This sentence was so fulfilled, when Canaan was conquered, that Simeon was weakest of all the tribes at the close of their sojourn in the wilderness. (Num. 26 : 14.) He was passed over in the blessing of Moses. (Deut. 33.) He received no separate territory in the allotment, except some cities of Judah's, (Josh. 19 : 1-

9.) See 1 Chron. 4 : 27, which records the fact that “ Simeon had not many children, neither did all their family multiply.” Two colonies were sent out and separated from the parent stock. (1 Chron. 4 : 24, 43.) Levi's portion was that of forty-eight towns or cities scattered in different districts of the land. (Josh. 21 : 1, 40.) True, indeed, this scattering of Levi was changed into a blessing for the tribes by his accession to the priesthood. So Moses pronounces a different sentence upon Levi. (Deut. 33 : 8.) And Simeon and Levi, like Reuben, are granted a share in the family heritage of Canaan. They are classed under one head—a hint that they will count but one tribe. (1.) It is the Lord's ordinance that men's deeds shall tell, not on themselves alone, but on their children after them. None of us liveth to himself, but also to others, and especially to our seed after us. Features of character, as well as features of countenance, pass by inheritance, as it were, or by hereditary descent from us to them. This is the law of God's providence. (2.) But this law in its operation admits of being modified. The Lord keeps the execution of it in his own hands. Simeon's sons continue to be like himself—doing the same works. On them the sentence falls with unmitigated severity. In the tribe of Levi there are indications of a better mind. And the sentence is graciously sanctified. (See *Candlish*.)

8. *Judah* is the first to receive an unmixed blessing. He is the fourth son. “ His is the blessing of inalienable supremacy and power.”—

^r thine hand *shall be* in the neck of thine enemies; ^s thy father's children shall bow down before thee.

9 Judah is ^t a lion's whelp; from the prey, my son, thou art gone up: ^v he stooped down, he couched as a lion, and as an old lion: who shall rouse him up?

10 ^x The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor ^y a lawgiver ^z from between his feet, ^a until Shiloh come: ^b and unto him *shall* the gathering of the people *be*.

^r Ps. 18: 40. ^s ch. 27: 29; 1 Chron. 5: 2. ^t Hos. 5: 14; Rev. 5: 5. ^v Numb. 23: 24, and 24: 9. ^x Numb. 24: 17; Jer. 30: 21; Zech. 10: 11. ^y Ps. 60: 7, and 108: 8; or, Numb. 21: 18. ^z Deut. 28: 57. ^a Isa. 11: 1, and 62: 11; Ezek. 21: 27; Dan. 9: 25; Matt. 21: 9; Luke 1: 32: 33. ^b Isa. 2: 2, and 11: 10, and 42: 1, 4, and 49: 6, 7, 22, 23, and 55: 4, 5, and 60: 1, 3, 4, 5; Hag. 2: 7; Luke 2: 30, 31, 32.

Keil and Delitzsch. Heb.—*Judah, thou—thy brethren shall praise thee.* The name signifies not merely the *praised one*, but he for whom Jehovah is praised. (Ch. 29: 35.) “This *nomen* the patriarch seized as an *omen*, and expounded it as a presage of the future history of Judah. He should be all that his name implied. See how Judah's noble character had already been displayed in the history of Joseph. (Ch. 37: 26; 43: 9, 10; 44: 16.) He would be victorious—*thy hand on the neck of thy enemies*—grasping them—*thy father's sons shall bow down to thee*, as was predicted in case of Joseph. (Ch. 36: 6–8.) Under David this was fulfilled when all the tribes of Israel paid homage to the tribe of Judah. (2 Sam. 5: 1, 2; comp. 1 Sam. 18: 6, 7, 16.)

9. Judah is now characterized as lion-like in nature and prowess. *A lion's whelp*—a young lion; in youth-time even giving early indications of supremacy—then soon triumphing in mastery of the prey; *from the prey, my son, thou art gone up* (to the forests. Sol. Song 4: 8.) *He has lain down—he croucheth as a lion* in conscious supremacy—*like a lioness*—most fierce in defending her young—no one daring to rouse him up. ¶ *Who shall rouse him?* The passage plainly implies something more than Judah's lead in the des-

ert and in the wars of the Judges' time, and points to the position attained by Judah, through the war-like successes of David. This is admitted by *Knobel* as cited by *Keil and Delitzsch*.

10. This lion-predominacy is now more literally expressed. *The sceptre shall not depart*—a tribal sceptre—a symbol of royal authority. ¶ *Nor a lawgiver*—nor a ruler's staff. (*Keil, Kulisch*.) The term means first a commander—*lawgiver*, (Deut. 33: 21,) then a judicial staff or ruler's sceptre, (Numb. 21: 18.) When the ancient kings addressed public assemblies, they held in their hands this sceptre. When they sat in state upon the throne they rested it between their feet, unless personal application was made to them, when they stretched it out. A Persian king is represented, on the ruins of Persepolis, as holding the staff between his feet, while it inclined toward his shoulder. But the sense of *lawgiver* is best suited here to the varied form of the parallelism. And then the figure is of the lion, who has *between his feet* the lawgiver; that is, has the legislative control, or the control of the state. Judah shall be dominant, and shall have the authority and control as a tribe, until Shiloh come. ¶ *Until Shiloh come.* The personal feature of this prophecy has been every way rendered.

Some reading, *Shiloh*—his son, but the word is never met with in this sense. Others read it as שׁוֹלֹם for שָׁלוֹם *who* and לָהֶם *to him*—until he *who* to him—supplying other chief words (as) *the dominion belongs*. Turner reads, “*Until he comes to whom it belongs*,” that is, the kingdom or control. This is not authorized. Others read, *Shiloh* as meaning *rest*, or *place of rest*—till rest comes, or, *he comes to a place of rest*, which *Delitzsch* pronounces grammatically impossible. Others read, *until he come to Shiloh*. This is the name of a town or city of Ephraim, where the tabernacle was pitched on the conquest of Canaan by the Israelites under Joshua, and remained till at least the time of Eli. (Judg. 18: 31; 1 Sam. 1: 3; 2: 12.) *Kalisch* reads, *Even when they come to Shiloh*. And he refers it to the time when, after the revolt of the ten tribes, the division was accomplished into two kingdoms by the co-operation of the prophet Ahijah, and most probably by a public proclamation at *Shiloh*, his native town, and for centuries the place of general or national assemblies. “It is (he says) from this equilibrium of Ephraim and Judah as the point of view that our address is to be understood. *The sceptre shall not depart from Judah even if many flock to Shiloh and join the crown of Joseph*. He refers to 1 Kings 11: 36–39. But the extreme remoteness of this explanation is conclusive against it. By others the reference is to Josh. 18: 1, where, after the conquest of the land and its distribution among the tribes had begun, the congregation assembled at *Shiloh* and erected the tabernacle, and proceeded to complete the partition of the land. But *Murphy* replies to this, (1.) Judah did not come to *Shiloh* in any exclusive sense, besides that, (2.) *Shiloh* had not yet been named as a known locality in

the land of promise. (3.) His coming thither with his fellows had no bearing on his supremacy. (4.) He did not come to *Shiloh* as the seat of his government or any part of his territory. (5.) The real sovereignty of Judah took place after this convention at *Shiloh* and not before it. Even if *Shiloh* existed in Jacob's time, it had no prominence and is not named in the patriarchal history. Hence it could not have been referred to as the goal of Judah's supremacy except by Divine revelation. And then where is the fulfilment? Judah did not there find permanent rest, nor the willing obedience of the nations. Besides, up to the time of the arrival at *Shiloh*, Judah did not possess the promised rule over the tribes. Though it took lead in the march, it did not hold the chief command. (Numb. 2: 3–9; 10: 14.) The sceptre was held by Moses, a Levite, in the wilderness, and by Joshua, an Ephraimite, at the conquest of Canaan. It was not till after the rejection of the abode at *Shiloh*, and after the removal of the ark of the covenant by the Philistines, (1 Sam. 4,) that God selected the tribe of Judah and chose David. (Ps. 78: 60–72. See *Keil* and *Delitzsch*.) “Had Jacob, therefore, promised to his son Judah the sceptre, and the ruler's staff over the tribes until he came to *Shiloh*, he would have uttered no prophecy, but simply a pious wish, which would have remained entirely unfulfilled.” *Shiloh* is, therefore, to be taken as a personal name and not the name of a place. It is in close connection with *Shilomoh*—Solomon. It is from the verb signifying to *rest*, and means the personal *rest*. Jesus is called our *peace*. The Virgin's son is predicted by Isaiah as “the Prince of peace.” “The counsel of peace shall be betwixt them both”—both his offices. (Zech. 6: 13.) We regard

this, therefore, as a title of the Messiah, in common with the whole line of Jewish interpreters and the whole Christian church. And the advent of the Messiah is here pointed to, and proclaimed. This makes the sense consistent, that before Messiah's coming, the highest pitch of Judah's supremacy in its primary form was to be attained. So it was attained. By the coming of Shiloh, that supremacy was to be replaced by the higher form of pre-eminence which the Prince of Peace inaugurated. Though Judea had become a conquered province of the Romans prior to Christ's coming, yet it retained its religious polity and its power of self-government until some seventy years after His advent, when the Jewish temple and polity were destroyed. The tribal sceptre was with Judah in all the periods from the time of David, (1 Chron. 28 : 4,) under the revolt, till the captivity, when the nation was virtually absorbed in Judah; and whatever trace of self-government remained belonged to him until the birth of Jesus, who was the lineal descendant of the royal line of David, and of Judah, and was the Messiah, the anointed of heaven to be the king of Zion and of Israel in a far higher sense than ever before. (See *Murphy*.) To object to this interpretation that the expectation of a personal Messiah was foreign to the patriarchal age, is to beg the very question in dispute, and "to decide how much the patriarch Jacob ought to have been able to prophesy." "It has been supposed by Eusebius and other very respectable writers, that "the sceptre departed from Judah" on the accession of Herod, who is called "a foreigner," and who was not of Jewish extraction. But the fact does not warrant the conclusion. The Jewish nation still retained the right of self-government. The exer-

cise of the sceptre was indeed restricted, but was not taken away. Herod's government was Jewish government and was regulated by Jewish laws. As well might it be said that the sceptre departed from the French nation when the Corsican became their Emperor. The civil rights of the Jewish people were controlled by the influence of the Romans, but they were not entirely taken away until the overthrow of the nation."—*Turner*. The prophecy of a personal Saviour was dimly given in the garden, and developed in Noah's benediction. And now those same prophetic ideas are more fully expressed in this passage, of a great Comer putting down evil, and of Japheth dwelling in the tents of Shem, or the seed of Abraham blessing the nations, or *the obedience of the nations accruing to the Shiloh*. This view harmonizes the whole chain of early prophecies. In the very next prediction (*Balaam's*) the ideas are more fully developed, and Judah's lion-hearted nature is transferred to Israel as a nation, (Numb. 23 : 24; 24 : 9,) and the figure of the sceptre or ruler coming forth from Israel to smite all his foes (Numb. 24 : 17) is taken verbatim from these, (vs. 9, 10.) And so the prophecies expand and are unfolded till Nathan announces to David the promise, which is the basis of all the Messianic Psalms, that he should never fail to have a son to sit upon his throne. (2 Sam. 7 : 13.) In this sense the reign and sceptre of the tribe of Judah, in the person of the Shiloh, is to be *forever*. So Solomon saw in his own reign of peace (by the spirit of prophecy) the coming glorious, peaceful reign of the Prince of Peace, the SHILOH—*rest or peace*. (Ps. 72.) And thus the kingdom of Judah arose from its temporary overthrow to a new and imperishable glory in Jesus Christ,

11 ^c Binding his foal unto the vine, and his ass's colt unto the choice vine; he washed his garments in wine, and his clothes in the blood of grapes:

12 ^d His eyes *shall be* red with wine, and his teeth white with milk.

c 2 Kings 18:32. d Prov. 23:29.

(Heb. 7:14,) who conquers all foes as "the Lion of the tribe of Judah," (Rev. 5:5,) and reigns as the true Prince of Peace and as "OUR PEACE," (Eph. 2:14,) *forever and ever*. (See *Keil and Delitzsch*. See Isa. 9:5, 6; 11:1-10; Ezek. 21:27, "*till he comes to whom the right belongs*.") Calvin has it, when Shiloh should come the tribe should no longer boast either an independent king or a judge of their own. The phrase expressed by *until* עַד כִּי does not necessarily limit the supremacy, as if it would then terminate, though this has been the general view, and is the more common meaning. (See Jer. 26:13, "*and grew until he became very great*.") It does not imply that that was the end of the growth, or that thence there was a decline. So says *Keil*: "It is evident that the coming of Shiloh is not to be regarded as terminating the rule of Judah, from the last clause of the verse, according to which it was only then that it would attain to dominion over the nations." It is more commonly understood as pointing to the destruction of the Jewish state subsequent to the coming of the Shiloh. And difficulties have been found in the fact that Judea became a conquered province of Rome prior to Christ's coming. But the Jewish polity was retained, and the right of self-government, until A. D. 70. Yet in the larger sense of the passage Judah is to be understood as only then attaining to full dominion, when Shiloh's coming should introduce the obedience of the nations. And the prophecy does

not exclude the idea of a temporary loss of power. (Ezek. 21:29.) Finally, the history proves the prophecy. The facts illuminate the phrases. Such a Shiloh has come. Such a kingdom has arisen from Judah as is here implied. And already it is plainly indicated to *whom it is, and to whom alone*, that the obedience of the nations can be said to be and belong—the Lord Jesus Christ. ¶ *The gathering of the people*. The term here, *yiqhath*, means *the obedience of a son—willing, filial obedience, homage*. The people cannot refer to the associated tribes, for Judah already holds the tribal sceptre over them prior to the coming of the Shiloh. It must refer to the people or nations of the world. Universal obedience shall be rendered to Him—the SHILOH. This is "the seed of Abraham in whom all the families of the earth are to be blessed." Thus the Messianic promise narrows down to describe the personal Messiah. First, it is *the seed* in general terms. Then *thy seed*, Abraham's. Then the very tribe of Abraham's descendants is here given—Judah.

11, 12. *Binding his foal unto the vine—binding his she-ass to the vine*. Judah's blessing is here continued in a description of his abundant products and possessions in the promised land. Judah is represented as having attained dominion over surrounding enemies, and so he may enjoy his repose amidst the abundance of his heritage. The quiet ass which he rides is tied to the vine. Riding was upon asses, commonly (except camels), and in later times

13 ¶ Zebulun shall dwell at the haven of the sea; and he *shall be* for an haven of ships; and his border *shall be* unto Zidon.

14 ¶ Issachar is a strong ass, couching down between two burdens:

15 And he saw that rest *was* good, and the land that *it was* pleasant; and bowed^f his shoulder to bear, and became a servant unto tribute.

e Deut. 33: 18, 19: Josh. 19: 10, 11. f 1 Sam. 10: 9.

riding upon an ass was the mark of dignity and state. (Judg. 1: 14; 10: 4; 12: 14; 2 Sam. 19: 27.) Riding upon white asses was the equipage of judges. *Luther* and some of the Fathers regard this passage as describing the Shiloh, the Lord Jesus Christ, in His advent, who rode upon an ass and an ass's colt. But the application to Judah is best carried out. ¶ *Wine and milk* were the rich products of Palestine, and here the wine is represented as so abundant that his clothes may be washed in it as in water. And so, too, he has his fill of wine and milk, so as to have his *eyes red* or *sparkling* or *dull with wine*, and his *teeth white with milk*. This—*white of teeth from milk*—shall be the full enjoyment that Judah shall have in the abundant products of the soil, which "*flowed with milk*," and abounded in wine. There is a reference, also, to the gospel provisions, which are called by the prophet "*wine and milk*," (Isa. 55: 1,) as there is in the former clause, to the Messiah's advent of peace and triumphant entry into Jerusalem, sitting upon an ass and upon a colt the foal of an ass. (Zech. 9: 9.) The soil of Judah near Hebron and Engedi produced the best wine in Canaan. That hill country of Judea was the district from which the spies took the enormous clusters. We saw around Hebron the most enormous bunches of young grapes on the vines. (See Numb. 13: 23,

24.) Fine pasture lands were and are still found in Judah's territory—by Tekoah and Carmel. (1 Sam. 25: 2; Amos: 1; 2 Chron. 26; 10.)

13. *Zebulun* means *dwelling*. ¶ *At the haven of the sea—to the shore of the ocean*.—*Keil*. *On the coast of seas. For a haven of the sea he dwells, for a haven of ships is he*.—*Kalisch*. It is commonly thought that this tribe was located on the sea-coast extending to Sidon. *Keil* reads, *And indeed, towards the coast of ships, and his side towards Sidon*. Lit.—*Upon Sidon*. *Keil* holds that it "did not touch the Mediterranean nor Sidon, but was separated from it by Asher, and from the Sea of Galilee by Naphtali. So that here is proof that the prophecy could not have been written after the event." *Keil* thinks that the meaning of the name is dwelt upon to point out the blessing this tribe was to receive from the situation of its inheritance. (Deut. 33: 19.) *Zebulun* may have had some shipping ports on the Phœnician coast near Sidon, or near Carmel.

14, 15. *Issachar*—*burden-bearer*. *A bony* (or strong) *ass, crouching between the folds*.—*Kalisch*. *Lying down within his borders*.—*Turner*. *Crouching between the hurdles*.—*Murphy*. Lounging among the pens or stalls in which the cattle were lodged. (Judg. 5: 16.) "Ease, at the cost of liberty, will be the characteristic of the tribe of Issachar."—*Delitzsch*. Content

16 ¶ ^g Dan shall judge his people, as one of the tribes of Israel.

17 ^h Dan shall be a serpent by the way, an adder in the path, that biteth the horse-heels, so that his rider shall fall backward.

18 ⁱ I have waited for thy salvation, O Lord!

19 ¶ ^k Gad, a troop shall overcome him : but he shall overcome at the last.

^g Deut. 33 : 22 ; Judg. 18 : 1, 2. ^h Judg. 18 : 27. ⁱ Ps. 25 : 6, and 119 : 166, 174 ; Isa. 25 : 9. ^k Deut. 33 : 20 ; 1 Chron. 5 : 18.

with material good—given to agriculture and satisfied with his slavish work and easy wages. “Like an idle beast of burden, he would rather submit to the yoke and be forced to do the work of a slave than risk his possessions and peace in the struggle for liberty.” The next clause explains to this effect. ¶ *He saw that rest was a good, (Keil,) and the land that it was pleasant, and he bowed his shoulder to bear, and became a servant of tribute.* Issachar, however, in the wars of the judges, gained renown for heroism. (But see Judg. 5 : 14, 15, 18.) And they are credited with being prudent and sagacious. “They were men that had understanding of the times to know what Israel ought to do.” (1 Chron. 12 : 32.) ¶ *Between two burdens.* Rosenmüller reads, between the two borders, or boundaries. This involves a passing censure or reproach.

16, 17. *Dan.* The sons of the handmaids here follow the sons of Leah. *Dan*—from a verb that means to judge. *Dan will procure his people justice.* Keil. *Dan will judge his people.* Kalisch. Though the son of a handmaid, he was to be as one of the tribes of Israel. “He shall have equal portion with his brethren, the sons of Leah.” *Let Dan become a serpent by the way—a horned adder in the path, that biteth the horse’s heels, so that its rider falls back.*—Keil. *Dan shall be a serpent upon the way, that biteth, etc.* A serpent subtlety was a characteristic of the tribe in which the romantic chivalry of the

brave, gigantic Samson is conspicuous, when, with the cunning of the serpent, he overthrew the mightiest foes. This “horned serpent” is of the color of the sand, and fatally wounds the traveller by throwing out its feelers. Samson, who was also an eminent one of the judges, was of this tribe. And some have supposed that this passage is a prophecy of Samson as a judge of his people.

18. Severe conflicts are implied already by these characteristics of Dan. Hence the patriarch now breaks out in the earnest prayer, “*I have waited for thy salvation, O Jehovah.*” Thus he expresses his confidence that his descendants would receive the help of the Covenant God, and he expects His salvation—“the redemption of Messiah, the Son of David, which thou through thy word hast promised to bring to thy people, the children of Israel. For this, thy redemption, my soul waits” This is the paraphrase of the *Targums* (Jerus. and Jona.) which regards the passage as Messianic.

19. *Gad—a troop. A troop shall overcome him—will crowd upon him. A host will oppress him.*—Kalisch. *A press presses him.*—Keil. But though subject thus to the assaults of the enemy, he shall *press his heel—harass his rear.* He is counted among the braves. (1 Chron. 5 : 18 ; 12 : 8–15.) Keil understands this term (*heel*) not of the *rear guard*, but rather of the *reserves*. He shall rout and pursue his enemies.

20 ¶ ¹ Out of Asher his bread *shall be* fat, and he shall yield royal dainties.

21 ¶ ^m Naphtali *is* an hind let loose: he giveth goodly words.

22 ¶ Joseph *is* a fruitful bough, *even* a fruitful bough by a well, *whose* branches run over the wall:

1 Deut. 33: 24; Josh. 19: 24. m Deut. 33: 23.

20. *Out of Asher.* The word means *blessed*. *Out of Asher, fat (rich) his bread (cometh) and he yieldeth royal dainties.* A very fertile soil is thus indicated. The territory of Asher, extending from Carmel to Tyre, comprised some of the richest plains, abounding in wheat and oil. "*He will furnish royal dainties.*" Solomon supplied the household of King Hiram from this district. (1 Kings 5: 11.)

21. *Naphtali is a hind let loose—A deer roaming at liberty.*—Taylor. *He shooteth forth goodly branches (majestic antlers.) He uttereth words of beauty.*—Kalisch. *A bounding hind. Words of pleasantness he brings.* Murphy thinks that "eloquence in prose and verse was characteristic of this tribe." They are found triumphing over Jabin's host, and this is celebrated in the song of Deborah and Barak. (Judg. 4: 5.) If the first clause of the verse refers to the pleasant territory over which the tribe roams at liberty, then the second clause may refer to the exaltation and joy of the tribe. *De Wette* and *Duthe* read *Naphtali is a spreading tree, (terebinth,) which puts forth beautiful branches.* So *Bochart*. But the former rendering is better. May not Naphtali have outstripped his brethren on returning from Egypt, and have first conveyed the news of Joseph's dignity and power? "The Naphtalites were the highlanders of Palestine." Jacob may have had in eye one of their own gazelles as an emblem of the tribe. *A hind roaming at large.* We have

seen these beautiful creatures leaping over the hills in this upland region. And they might also seem to represent the character of the tribe. "Timid and undecided at first, more inclined to flee than to fight; but, when once brought to bay, a fierce, active, and dangerous foe." (Comp. 2 Sam. 2: 18; 1 Chron. 12: 8.) *He uttereth words of beauty* has been thought to refer to the poetic effusion of Barak—the war-song of the Naphtalite hero and Israel's deliverer. (Judg. 5.) But may it not rather refer prophetically to the *gospel words* of our Lord—those words of matchless beauty? And is not this the point of the reference in Matt. 4: 13, 16, "And leaving Nazareth He came and dwelt in Capernaum, which is upon the sea-coast in the borders of Zabulon and Naphtalim: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the prophet, saying, The land of Zabulon and the land of Naphtalim, *the region of the sea*, Perea, Galilee of the Gentiles, the people which sat in darkness saw great light"? The *sea-coast* refers to the Sea of Galilee, which was in the province of Naphtalim. And this sea privilege, together with its proximity to the Mediterranean coast, is compassed by the patriarch's blessing. And so Moses repeats the idea. "O Naphtali, satisfied with favor, filled with the blessing of Jehovah, possess thou the west and the south." Lit.—Deut. 33: 23. *The Sea (of Galilee) and Darom.*

22–26. *Joseph.* The full heart of Jacob overflows towards his beloved,

23 The archers have ⁿ sorely grieved him, and shot *at him*, and hated him :

24 But his ^o bow abode in strength, and the arms of his hands were made strong by the hands of ^p the mighty *God* of Jacob : (^q from thence ^r is the shepherd ^s the stone of Israel) :

25 ^t *Even* by the God of thy father, who shall help thee, ^u and by the Almighty, ^x who shall bless thee with blessings of heaven

n ch. 37 : 4, 24, 28 ; and 39 : 20 ; and 42 : 21 ; Ps. 118 : 13. o Job 29 : 20 ; Ps. 37 : 15. p Ps. 132 : 2, 5. q ch. 45 : 11, and 47 : 12, and 50 : 21. r Ps. 80 : 1. s Isa. 28 : 16. t ch. 28 : 13, 21, and 35 : 3, and 43 : 23. u ch. 17 : 1, and 35 : 11. x Deut. 33 : 13.

long lost, but restored and exalted son Joseph ; and on him he pronounces the richest, largest benedictions, as the savior of his house and the type of the coming Deliverer.

¶ *A fruitful bough.* Heb.—*Son of a fruit-tree—a fruit-tree scion.* This denotes the remarkable increase of this adopted tribe. (Numb. 1 : 33–35 ; Josh. 16 : 17 ; Deut. 33 : 17.) ¶ *By a well—at the well.* This is the emphatic feature. “He shall be like a tree planted by the rivers (streams) of water.” (Ps. 1 : 3.)

¶ *Branches* (Heb.—*daughters*) *run (mount) over the wall* (by the trellis-work). The twigs and boughs of this flourishing fruit-tree (severally) *creep over the wall.* The different branches are represented as creeping up over the wall in richest and most spreading luxuriance, outgrowing the enclosure. He is savior of the people, and he is the twofold tribe, whose lot becomes double.

23. Yet he should be the object of attack to his enemies. ¶ *The archers assault him.* Lit.—*And they harassed him, and shot at him, and waylaid him, the masters of arrows—arrow-men.* Referring not so much to the past as to the future as already past—the conflicts of his descendants. ¶ *And shot at him, etc.* Kalisch reads, *And they assembled in multitude and persecuted him.* But the former verb is rather as rendered in our version. ¶ *But his bow abode in strength.* In a strong, unyielding po-

sition.—Keil. His bow, for repelling the assaults of the archers, was not weakened, but strongly strung and powerful in execution. (Job 29 : 20.) ¶ *And the arms of his hands remain pliant.*—Keil. *Were brisk.*—Kalisch. The word means *to be flexible, active, nimble*, for the use of the bow with great agility and promptitude. In 2 Sam. 6 : 16 the same word is used. *The arms are elastic*, else the hands could not hold or direct the arrow. And this is *from the hands of the Mighty One of Jacob*, enduing him with strength, and giving him alacrity and vigor in the use of his weapons against all foes. *The Mighty One of Jacob*, who had shown His mightiness in Jacob's deliverance. (See Isa. 1 : 24.) ¶ *From thence—the Shepherd, the Stone of Israel.* This is the Living, Personal Source of all strength and blessing. *From thence—from Him who is the Shepherd*, (ch. 48 : 15,) the Guardian and Guide of His covenant people. Turner reads, *By the name (power) of the Shepherd, the Stone (rock) of Israel.* Stanley refers this title to the Stone of Bethel, Jacob's pillar. Ch. 28 : 18, 19. See also Zech. 3 : 9, the foundation of hope and of subsistence, “the Rock that is higher,” the tried Stone, the precious Corner-stone, the sure foundation. (Ps. 118 ; 1 Pet. 2 : 4, 6.)

25. The passage is here continued. Heb.—*From the God of thy father—and He shall help thee and with the Al-*

above, blessings of the deep that lieth under, blessings of the breasts and of the womb :

26 The blessings of thy father have prevailed above the blessings of my progenitors, ^y unto the utmost bound of the everlasting hills ; ^z they shall be on the head of Joseph, and on the crown of the head of him that was separate from his brethren.

27 ¶ Benjamin shall ravin ^a as a wolf ; in the morning he shall devour the prey, ^b and at night he shall divide the spoil.

^y Deut. 33 : 15 ; Hab. 3 : 6. ^z Deut. 33 : 16. ^a Judg. 20 : 21, 25 ; Ezek. 22 : 25, 27. ^b Numb. 23 : 24 ; Esther 8 : 11 ; Ezek. 39 : 10 ; Zech. 14 : 1, 7.

mighty and He shall bless thee. Blessings of heaven from above, etc. (shall come upon thee. Vs. 26.) The blessings of rain and sun and dew of heaven above, and blessings of running brooks and the deep fountains from beneath. And not to stop here with the vegetable world, but *blessings of the breasts and of the womb*, in all animal nature. "Whatever of man and of cattle can be fruitful shall multiply and have enough. The children of the household and the young of the flocks and herds" are comprehended.

26. *The blessings of thy father have prevailed above, etc.* Keil reads, "*Surpass the blessings of my progenitors to the borders of the everlasting hills.*" "In the spirit he sees the Divine promises already fulfilled, while his ancestors were obliged to rest content with the assured hope of their fulfilment."—*Philippson*. The blessings here pronounced upon Joseph surpass those that came upon Jacob from his fathers, *unto the boundary of the everlasting hills*—as far as the old mountains tower above the earth, or so that they should reach to the summits of the primeval mountains ; like a great deluge of blessing, rising so as to cover all the highest mountains. This rendering follows the Vulgate and Chaldee and the Masorite reading. But the clause, as parallel with the following, "everlasting hills," means, rather, "*eternal mountains.*" So *Kalisch*

and *Gesenius*. And this is supported by Deut. 33 : 15 ; Hab. 3 : 6. Then it will read, *Surpass the blessings of the eternal mountains, the bound, or glory of the everlasting hills*. The term *taivath* means commonly *desire, delight*. Others render it here *boundary*, from another root. So *Ewald*, *Delitzsch*, etc. But the parallelism favors the former and common reading, *delight, charm, glory*. ¶ *They shall be, or may they be* (these blessings upon) *for the head of Joseph, and (upon) for the crown of the* (head of him who was) *separated from his brethren*. Separated, first by painful exile, then by glorious promotion and distinction. These ample blessings upon Joseph were abundantly realized, as is shown by the history of the two tribes Manasseh and Ephraim.

27. *Benjamin—a wolf. He will tear in pieces*. All day long busy, hunting after prey. *In the morning he devours prey, and in the evening he divides spoil*. "Incessant and victorious capture of booty."—*Delitzsch*. This warlike character of Benjamin, well sustained by successes, appears in the history, Judg. 5 : 14 ; its distinguished archers and slingers, Judg. 20 : 16 ; 1 Chron. 8 : 39, 40 ; 12 : 2 ; 2 Chron. 14 : 7, 8 ; 17 : 17. Saul and Jonathan sprang from this tribe. (1 Sam. 11 and 13 ; 2 Sam. 1 : 19–23. See Judg. 19 : 20 ; Deut. 33 : 12.)

28 ¶ All these *are* the twelve tribes of Israel; and this *is* it that their father spake unto them, and blessed them: every one according to his blessing he blessed them.

29 And he charged them, and said unto them, I ^e am to be gathered unto my people: ^d bury me with my fathers ^e in the cave that *is* in the field of Ephron the Hittite.

30 In the cave that *is* in the field of Machpelah, which *is* before Mamre, in the land of Canaan ^f which Abraham bought with the field of Ephron the Hittite, for a possession of a burying-place.

31 (^g There they buried Abraham and Sarah, his wife; ^h there they buried Isaac and Rebecca his wife; and there I buried Leah.)

32 The purchase of the field and of the cave that *is* therein, *was* from the children of Heth.

33 And when Jacob had made an end of commanding his sons, he gathered up his feet into the bed, and yielded up the ghost, and ⁱ *was* gathered unto his people.

c ch. 15: 15, and 25: 8. d ch. 47: 30; 2 Sam. 19: 37. e ch. 50: 13. f ch. 23: 16. g ch. 23: 19, and 25: 9. h ch. 35: 29. i ver. 29.

28. *All these are the tribes of Israel—twelve*—intimating that these blessings on the sons are, indeed, pronounced upon the twelve tribes respectively, and to be realized in their history—"Every one with that which was his blessing he blessed him"—that is, every one with his appropriate blessing. Even Reuben, Simeon, and Levi, though they were condemned for sins, received a share of the patrimonial blessing.

29-32. Jacob now solemnly repeats his charge to bury him in the family sepulchre. He had before this charged Joseph by oath with the special execution of this trust (ch. 49: 29, 31.) He now charges his twelve sons. ¶ *Bury me with my fathers.* Abraham and Isaac were buried there—also Sarah and Leah and Rebekah. He most carefully describes the burial-place, and the ownership which they had in the property. They who do not believe in any resurrection of the body are commonly careless of their burial-places, and are willing to blot out all family lines in their arrangement. But it is civilized and Christian to re-

spect our places of sepulture, and to retain our family grouping and abode there so far as we can. Jesus watches over the dust of his people. *Which Abraham bought—the purchase of a field from the children of Heth.* See Acts 7: 16, notes.

33. *And when Jacob had made an end,* etc. He had been divinely strengthened (as would seem) for this dying benediction by the same spirit which gave him the prophetic power; and now he feels that all is over—his work is done. He had been sitting upon his bed. He then *gathered up his feet into the bed and expired*—as if calmly breathing out his life without a struggle. His age is not here stated. It had been mentioned by anticipation at ch. 47: 28. ¶ *Was gathered unto his people.* (See ch. 25: 8.)

The entire passage may be rendered thus:—

REUBEN, my first-born thou!

My might—the firstling of my strength,
The superiority of rank—superiority of power.

Effervescence like waters, thou shalt not be superior,

For thou didst ascend thy father's bed;

CHAPTER L.

AND Joseph ^a fell upon his father's face, and ^b wept upon him, and kissed him.

a ch. 46: 4. b 2 Kings 13: 14.

Then thou didst defile (it.)
My couch he hath ascended.
SIMEON and LEVI are brothers.
Weapons of violence (are) their swords.
Into their council come thou not, my soul:

In their assembly mine honor shall not join.

For in their wrath they slew (a) man,
And in their revenge they houghed oxen.

Cursed (be) their wrath, for (it is) powerful;

And their vengeance, for it is cruel.

I will divide them in Jacob,

And I will scatter them in Israel.

JUDAH! thee thy brothers shall praise.

Thy hand is on the neck of thine enemies,

Thy father's sons shall bow down to thee.

A lion's whelp is Judah.

From the prey, my son, thou arisest;

He stoopeth, he croucheth like a lion,

Like a lioness—who shall rouse him?

There shall not depart the sceptre from Judah,

Nor the lawgiver from between his feet
Until Shiloh come;

And his shall be the homage of the nations.

Binding his she-ass to the vine,

And his ass's colt to the choice vine,

He washes his garments in wine,

And in the blood of grapes his raiment.

His eyes are sparkling from wine,

And white of teeth (is he) from milk."

ZEVLUN—For a haven of the sea he dwells

For a haven of ships is he;

And his side upon Sidon.

ISSACHAR—a strong ass.

Lounging among the folds;

And he saw repose that (it was) good,

And the land that (it was) pleasant;

And he bowed his shoulder to bear,

And he became a servant of tribute.

DAN will judge his people.

As one of the tribes of Israel (he shall be.)

Dan shall be a serpent upon the way,

An adder upon the path,

That biteth the heels of the horse,

And his rider falls backwards.

For thy salvation I have waited, O Jehovah!

GAD—a troop will crowd upon him,

But he will crowd upon the heel.

From ASHER rich (shall be his) bread.

And he will yield dainties of a king.

NAPHTALI—a hind roaming at large.

Words of pleasantness he brings.

A fruit-tree branch is JOSEPH—

A fruit-tree branch at a well.

(His) branches mount over the wall.

And they harassed him, and shot at him,

And waylaid him—the archers—

But his bow abode in strength,

And the arms of his hands were elastic,

From the hands of the mighty God of Jacob.

From thence, the Shepherd, the Stone of Israel,

From the God of thy Father, and He shall help thee,

And from the Almighty, and he shall bless thee.

Blessings of heaven from above,

Blessings of the deep from beneath,

Blessings of the breast and of the womb.

The blessings of thy father overtop

The blessings of the eternal mountains,

The glory of the everlasting hills.

May they be for the head of Joseph,

And for the crown of the separated from his brethren.

BENJAMIN—a wolf, he will tear in pieces.

In the morning he devours prey,

And in the evening he divides spoil.

CHAPTER L.

§ 73. BURIAL OF JACOB AT MACHPELAH. DEATH AND BURIAL OF JOSEPH.

1. Joseph now expresses most touchingly his fond, filial love in tears and kisses upon the dead face of his father (ch. 46: 4.) Oh! what

2 And Joseph commanded his servants the physicians to ° embalm his father: and the physicians embalmed Israel.

c ver. 26; 2 Chron. 16: 14; Matt. 26: 12; Mark 14: 8, and 16: 1; Luke 24: 1; John 12: 7, and 19: 39, 40.

crowds of overwhelming thoughts held him to that dear embrace! Though our faith goes with our departed Christian friends to glory, where they immediately enter, yet we cannot commonly restrain the natural emotion that bewails their loss to us, though the gain to them be unspeakable. If we could look at Christian death as the manifest passage to heaven, we should oftener have our feelings restrained at the coffin and grave of our beloved ones. Nay; we might bring flowers to adorn the coffin and the tomb, and sing of the joyous transition.

2. After Joseph has given way to this outburst of his filial grief, he composes himself so as to give the orders to *his servants the physicians to embalm his father*. There was commonly at first a preliminary mourning during the first day—then the body was given over to the *embalmers*, who formed a class by themselves, and commonly spent seventy days in their work, but in this case only forty. Embalming was the more necessary in this case, as the body was to be transported into Canaan. So soon as the embalming commences, the regular mourning season begins, and lasts about seventy days, and ends commonly with the process of *mummifying*. But in this case the seventy days' mourning period exceeded the embalming operation by thirty days. Medical science made much pretension in Egypt, but amounted to little. There were special physicians for each kind of disease. These were physicians belonging to Joseph's retinue. Herodotus gives an account of the ancient processes of embalming.

The most expensive cost \$1250; the next about \$400. There was a third process, very cheap. But with the Egyptians seventy days may have been commonly employed, or, perhaps, insisted on, because they believed that the existence of the soul depended on the preservation of the body. But Joseph's faith was the faith of the Scriptures. *Hengstenberg, Keil*, etc., contend that this forty days' term is quite in keeping with the statements of Herodotus, rightly understood. Thirty days, it is supposed, were employed in preparing the body, by the removal of material from the cavities, and by drying up the humors. Then forty days were employed in saturating it with spices, and wrapping it in folds of muslin or linen, and saturating the cloths with the embalming mixture. *Kalisch* gives a minute account of embalming as commonly practised in Egypt. "Though some mummies were not bandaged at all, but only covered with a mat, the quantity of bandages employed in others is extraordinary. They are often folded twenty to thirty times around the body—in some cases, they consist of not less than a thousand ells (up to a yard in breadth) and weigh thirty pounds and upwards. But the texture is occasionally as fine as muslin—the '*woven air*,'—the admiration of the ancient world. I brought with me from the pyramids of Sakhara,—where I bought it,—a female hand, in excellent preservation. The coarser muslin bandages first wound around each finger and the thumb, and then around the whole hand, several times, were thoroughly saturated with the embalming mixture

3 And forty days were fulfilled for him; for so are fulfilled the days of those which are embalmed: and the Egyptians ^d mourned for him threescore and ten days.

4 And when the days of his mourning were past, Joseph spake unto ^e the house of Pharaoh saying, If now I have found grace in your eyes, speak, I pray you, in the ears of Pharaoh, saying,

5 ^f My father made me swear saying, Lo, I die; in my grave ^g which I have digged for me in the land of Canaan, there shalt thou bury me. Now therefore let me go up, I pray thee, and bury my father, and I will come again.

6 And Pharaoh said, Go up, and bury thy father according as he made thee swear.

7 ¶ And Joseph went up to bury his father: and with him went up all the servants of Pharaoh, the elders of his house, and all the elders of the land of Egypt.

^d Numb. 20: 29; Deut. 34: 8. ^e Esther 4: 2. ^f ch. 47: 29. ^g 2 Chron. 16: 14; Isa 22: 16; Matt. 27: 60.

and then wrapped round with a finer material in long strips, altogether dozens of times.

2. *Forty days.* A public mourning was ordered, as on the death of a royal personage. ¶ *Spake unto the house of Pharaoh.* After the period of mourning was ended, Joseph, who could not go into the king's presence because he was unshaven and in mourning attire, (ch. 41: 14. Comp. Esther 4: 2,) applies to the king through the "house of Pharaoh"—the royal courtiers who were his attendants. He needed to use the best influence of the court (vs. 6) to obtain this permission, as he wished to go beyond the Egyptian border, and to take with him a large retinue, and the king would easily fear that such a valuable force might not return. "It belongs to the Egyptian sense of propriety to go with shorn head and beard, and only so is it allowed to appear before the king. Compare ch. 41: 14, where Joseph shaved himself and changed his garments before he went to Pharaoh."—*Egypt and Books of Moses.* Such peculiar customs serve to establish

the relation of the Pentateuch to Egypt and Moses.

5 Joseph pleads the solemn obligation of an oath, under which he lay to his deceased father, to pay to him the last rites of nature. ¶ *Which I have digged for me.* This term is applied to the preparation of a tomb. (2 Chron. 16: 14.) He thus speaks of having himself done what had been done by Abraham, (ch. 24,) though it is not impossible that he had made preparations there for himself when he buried Leah.

6. The permission was granted to Joseph, on the basis of the oath by which he was pledged.

7. The funeral procession went up, consisting of a very large train—*all the servants of Pharaoh, the elders of his house, and all the elders of the land of Egypt.* The royal retinue were assigned to Joseph in honor—the leading officials of the court and the state. This train of nobility and military with their equipages, constituting the royal suite of Joseph on this occasion, would make a grand impression. The route was about three hundred miles.

8 And all the house of Joseph, and his brethren, and his father's house: only their little ones, and their flocks, and their herds, they left in the land of Goshen.

9 And there went up with him both chariots and horsemen: and it was a very great company.

10 And they came to the threshing-floor of Atad, which is beyond Jordan, and there they ^h mourned with a great and very sore lamentation: ⁱ and he made a mourning for his father seven days.

11 And when the inhabitants of the land, the Canaanites, saw the mourning in the floor of Atad, they said, This is a grievous mourning to the Egyptians: wherefore the name of it was called Abel-mizraim, which is beyond Jordan.

h 2 Sam. 1: 17; Acts 8: 2. i 1 Sam. 31: 13; Job 2: 13.

8. The funeral train is further described. *All the house of Joseph.* Besides the court procession, there came also as special mourners, *all the household of Joseph and his brethren and his father's house.* "Not only the heads, but also all the sons and servants who were able to go." All of them went. Only their little ones, their flocks, and their herds were left behind, some suitable care for the little ones being of course provided, in the women who are not mentioned. We saw the representations of such funeral processions traced in the chambers of the tombs at Sakkara and Ghizeh. "The customs of funeral trains (says *Rossellini*) was peculiar to all periods and to all the provinces of Egypt.

9. *Chariots and horsemen*, added to this great procession, would make it formidable in a military point of view, and secure it from an attack of the predatory tribes on the borders. *Kalisch* thinks that the funeral train journeyed in a north-eastern direction towards Gaza (from Goshen), a journey of eight to ten days, within the boundaries of Canaan, and probably not much to the south of Hebron. They stopped at the threshing-floor of Atad, where both the sons of Jacob and the Egyptians who accompanied them, renewed their

mourning during seven days. The former next proceeded alone to the Cave of Machpelah to discharge their melancholy duty, while the latter waited at Atad for the return of the Hebrews, with whom they then journeyed back to Egypt." (See vs. 12.) If *Lepsius* is right in supposing that Joseph and his brethren were in Egypt during the reign of Sethos I., the constant wars that monarch waged with the Canaanites would have increased the difficulty which Joseph feared in obtaining the permission of Pharaoh, to go thither, and would have suggested the circuitous routes. ¶ *And it was a very great company—a very large army.* The Egyptians were fond of large and imposing processions at funerals. (*Heng. Egypt and Books of Moses.*) The train might have gone by Gaza, which is the more common route now. But they went around by the Dead Sea, as perhaps more safe at that time. They came to the threshing-floor of Atad—*Goren Atad (the buck-thorn floor.)* This was on the eastern side of the Jordan, (vs. 11.) Here they carried on a formal mourning of seven days—a great and very sore lamentation. The Canaanites, who watched the mourning, said, *this is a grievous mourning to the Egyptians.*

12 And his sons did unto him according as he commanded them :

13 For ^k his sons carried him into the land of Canaan, and buried him in the cave of the field of Machpelah which Abraham ^l bought with the field for a possession of a burying-place of Ephron the Hittite, before Mamre.

14 ¶ And Joseph returned into Egypt, he and his brethren, and all that went up with him to bury his father, after he had buried his father.

15 ¶ And when Joseph's brethren saw that their father was dead, ^m they said, Joseph will peradventure hate us, and will certainly requite us all the evil which we did unto him.

16 And they sent a messenger unto Joseph saying, Thy father did command before he died, saying,

17 So shall ye say unto Joseph, Forgive, I pray thee now, the trespass of thy brethren, and their sin ; ⁿ for they did unto thee evil : and now, we pray thee, forgive the trespass of the servants of ^o the God of thy father. And Joseph wept when they spake unto him.

18 And his brethren also went and ^p fell down before his face ; and they said, Behold we *be* thy servants.

^k ch. 49 : 29, 30 ; Acts 7 : 16. ^l ch. 23 : 16. ^m Job 15 : 21, 22. ⁿ Prov. 28 : 13. ^o ch. 49 : 25. ^p ch. 37 : 7, 10.

And hence they called the place *Abel-Mizraim, or mourning of the Egyptians.*

12, 13. His sons are here spoken of as alone having borne him to the burial ; the escort having probably stopped short at the border. (Vs. 8, note.) Here the burial-place is again noted and its purchase again recorded, as the title on holy record confirmed.

14. The procession returned after the burial, having reunited on the way.

15. Joseph's brethren are now again seized with sharp compunction for their sin against Joseph, and in their changed circumstances—the venerable father gone, who was a bond of love between the brothers—they bethink themselves of what might now be their case, supposing that Joseph should punish them for their abuse of him. Heb.—*If Joseph now should punish us, and requite all the evil that we have done to him—what then ?*

16, 17. The brothers, therefore, taking counsel of their fears, deputed one of their number to Joseph, imploring pardon. It may have been Benjamin whom they sent. It would seem that the aged patriarch, before his death, commanded them to secure such a thorough reconciliation. *Oh, pardon the transgression of thy brethren and their sin ; for they have done thee evil.* They made further use of their deceased parent's influence when they call themselves *servants of the God of thy father.* “According to the Jewish Talmud, (Gr. *Yebamoth*, fol. 63,) they invented this message. Jacob, who knew Joseph better, never suspected him, and left no message of the kind.”—*Raphall.* *And Joseph wept when they spoke to him.* So tenderly did he receive their petition. It was humiliating to them and painful to him.

18. They press their plea with all their importunity, showing every sign of penitence and entreaty. They prostrate themselves before him,

19 And Joseph said unto them, ^a Fear not: ^r for *am* I in the place of God?

20 ^s But as for you, ye thought evil against me; *but* ^t God meant it unto good, to bring to pass, as *it is* this day, to save much people alive.

21 Now therefore fear ye not: ^v I will nourish you, and your little ones. And he comforted them, and spake kindly unto them.

22 ¶ And Joseph dwelt in Egypt, he, and his father's house: and Joseph lived an hundred and ten years.

23 And Joseph saw Ephraim's children ^x of the third *generation*: ^y the children also of Machir, the son of Manasseh, ^z were brought up upon Joseph's knees.

^q ch. 45: 5. ^r Deut. 32: 35; Job 34: 29; Rom. 12: 19; Heb. 10: 30; 2-Kings 5: 7. ^s Ps. 56: 5; Isai. 10: 7. ^t ch. 45: 5, 7; Acts 3: 13, 14, 15. ^v ch. 47: 12; Matt. 5: 44. ^x Job 42: 16. ^y Numb. 32: 39. ^z ch. 30: 3.

making true still further the very dream of prophecy for which they so bitterly hated and persecuted him.

19. Joseph answered most tenderly, disclaiming any intention of revenge or any desire of their worship. *I in God's stead!* he exclaims. He calls them to their feet with encouragement.

20. And now he refers them to God's wonder-working providence, controlling all the events and issues and even their wicked intentions. The happy result did not excuse their cruelty. So they felt it. Joseph's promotion had indeed been brought about by their jealousy and wickedness; but does this satisfy their conscience? Never! It only sends to the heart a sharper sting. Heb.—*Ye had, indeed, evil in your mind against me; but God had it in mind for good—to make the evil eventuate in good, to bring to pass, as is now evident, (Lit.—as has occurred this day, Deut. 2: 30; 4: 20, etc.) to preserve alive a great nation. (Comp. ch. 45: 7.)*

21. Now, therefore, fear not; I will nourish you and your little ones. Thus our New Testament Joseph freely forgives our sins, in which we have crucified our Elder Brother

and Kinsman Redeemer, and He points us to the Divine plan, by which in His death we may have life; and more than all, He promises to take us into closest covenant favor, and pledges for ourselves and for our children to nourish and provide for us. *So he comforted them, and spoke kindly to them.*

22. Joseph's closing history is now recorded. So soon the son goes after the father, and the new record is made of death and burial. They who one day bury us, are the next day carried to the tomb. Joseph was settled in Egypt as were his father's descendants, and he lived one hundred and ten years. He lived eighty years after his exaltation as prime-minister of Egypt.

23. And Joseph's family was largely increased. *He saw Ephraim's sons of the third generation, that is, sons of great-grandsons, great-great-grandsons.* These are not to be understood as grandsons. The term here for *the third* (link) is distinguished expressly from *children's children* in Exod. 34: 7. Keil explains the possibility of this as follows: "As Joseph's two sons were born before he was thirty-seven years old, (ch. 41: 50,) and Ephraim

24 And Joseph said unto his brethren, I die; and ^a God will surely visit you, and bring you out of this land, unto the land ^b which he sware to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob.

25 And ^c Joseph took an oath of the children of Israel, saying, God will surely visit you, and ye shall carry up my bones from hence.

26 So Joseph died, *being* an hundred and ten years old: and they ^d embalmed him, and he was put in a coffin in Egypt.

a ch. 15: 14, and 46: 4, and 48: 21; Exod. 3: 16, 17; Heb. 11: 22. b ch. 15: 14, and 26: 3, and 35: 12, and 46: 4. c. Exod. 13: 19; Josh. 24: 32; Acts 7: 16. d ver. 2.

therefore was born at the latest in his thirty-sixth year, and possibly in his thirty-fourth, since Joseph was married in his thirty-first, he might have had grandsons by the time he was fifty-six or sixty years old, and great grandsons when he was from seventy eight to eighty-five; so that great-great-grandsons might have been born when he was one hundred or one hundred and ten years old." Besides, it is immediately added that he saw the great grandsons of Manasseh, viz., the sons of Machir, Manasseh's sons, but this is expressed by different terms. *Murphy* finds here a proof that an interval of about twenty years between the the birth of a father and of his first-born was not unusual in the time of Joseph. ¶ *Upon Joseph's knees.* This phrase commonly refers to a form of adoption, of children had through a handmaid or concubine. *Machir* was the first-born son of Manasseh. All this is recorded to show the rapid increase of Joseph's family and descendants in Egypt.

24, 25. Joseph now expresses his sense of approaching death. Whereupon he makes confession of his faith in the Covenant before his brethren, that God would bring them into the promised land, as He swore to the fathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Accordingly, in this sure confidence of faith, he requires of them an oath, that in their removal to their own land, they would not fail to carry

up with them his bones. The record of his burial is preserved, (Exod. 13: 19; Josh. 24: 32.) It was at *Shechem*. The tomb was pointed out to us, and the greedy natives exact largely of those who desire to enter it. (Ch. 33: 19; notes.) Joseph gave this commandment by faith. (Heb. 11: 22.)

26. In accordance with Joseph's request, and in order to preserve his remains for burial in Canaan, they *embalmed him and put him in the coffin* commonly in use, made of sycamore. According to the custom, the coffin was placed in a chamber, and could be removed after many years, as was not uncommon among them. "Thus the account of the pilgrimage of the patriarchs terminates with an act of faith on the part of the dying Joseph. And after his death, in consequence of his instructions, the coffin with his bones became a standing exhortation to Israel, to turn its eyes away from Egypt to Canaan, the land promised to its fathers, and to wait in the patience of faith for the fulfilment of the promise."—*Keil*. A period of bondage and distress is now before the Israelites in Egypt, when God's remembrance of them, to place them in the land of the Covenant, shall prove to be their only help and hope. The reason that Joseph did not order his bones carried up immediately to Canaan as his father's had been, may be that he would have this abiding testimony

and plea left among them to urge their departure at the proper time, and that he would be understood as thus casting in his lot with them in the patience of hope.

(1.) Joseph may be viewed as typical of Christ in the personal characteristics of meekness, wisdom, integrity and purity, and triumphant resistance of temptation. (2.) The history may at least be regarded as typical, and foreshadowing the New Testament Joseph, who was to come. He is betrayed and sold into the hands of the Gentiles, and all is ordered that he might be exalted to the right hand of power, and work deliverance and salvation for the covenant household, while he is a light to lighten the Gentiles among whom he sojourns. (3.) As he gave commandment concerning his bones in the faith of that better country, and of the better covenant, so our Joseph sings by the mouth of David, "My flesh also shall rest in hope."—*See Candlish.*

The Book of Genesis has led us from the dawn of the creation to the descent of a chosen people into Egypt. The leading points of the history intervening are Paradise, the Deluge, and the Covenant with Abraham. These are points of new Revelation and of new Promise, the consistent steps in the unfolding of the Plan of Grace, according to the first Prophecy in the Garden. These all evince, in their agreement, the unity of the Book of Genesis, while the book itself, as a whole, serves as the fitting introduction to a volume which is manifestly bound up with it, and to which it is indispensable. Adam, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, are the heads of the historic list, as the record advances from Paradise to Palestine and Egypt—from the garden of Eden to the land of Exile, until now we are led to look from the land of Bondage back to the PROMISED LAND.

APPENDIX.

APPENDIX A.

THE history of the world is the history of Redemption. God created the world with a view to redeem it. All things were created, not only *by* Jesus Christ, but *for* Him also, and by him all things consist. Col. 1:16, 17. The record of man's creation is therefore the Preface of the Book of Redemption; and the old creation is briefly narrated as an introduction to the new creation.

The history of the world incorporates, therefore, the history of the Church in the world, and brings early and prominently to view the annals of the covenant people chosen out of the world to constitute the Church of God. Adam, therefore, points directly to Abraham, through Noah; and Noah is the representative and type of the elect people, as the Ark is of the Church, outriding the deluge of God's wrath upon the wicked world, and landing its tenantry safe under the headship of one whose name is *Noah*—REST, and who is thus the type of the *SHILOH* who was to come, and to whom should be "the obedience of the nations." The record, therefore, hastens from Adam to Abraham, through a few brief chapters; compassing the period of two thousand years, and half the history from the creation to Christ in so small a space, to show that it is not the mode of the creation, half so much as the manner of

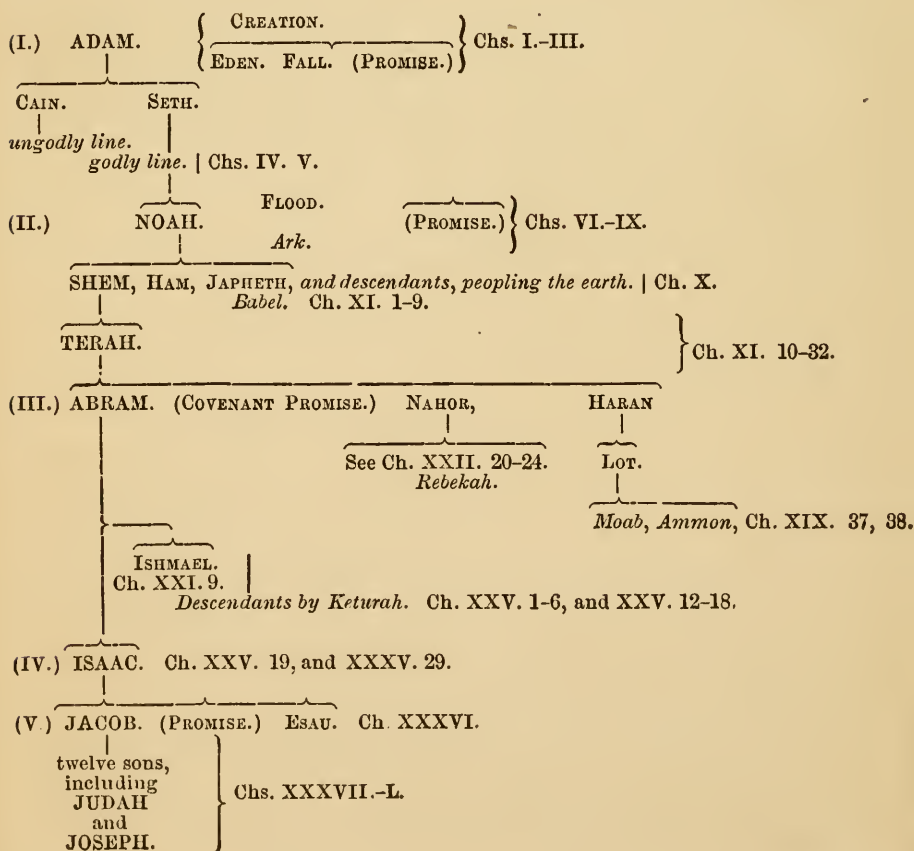
the redemption, that God would set forth in the Scriptures.

Murphy analyzes the *Book of Genesis*, and divides it into *eleven* component parts, which he supposes to have been different documents, either used by Moses, as the editor, or originally composed by him. We have seen in the introduction that the use of existing documents, by direction of the inspiring Spirit, does not at all compromise the highest doctrine of inspiration. And yet, we prefer to regard these *eleven* parts as only different sections of the book, and all equally due to the authorship of Moses, though *Dr. Murphy* inclines to the other view. These sections, excepting only the first, which has no introductory phrases, begin with the formula, "These are the generations,"—the third section, however, having "This is the book of the generations."

"On the supposition that writing was known to Adam, Gen. I.–IV., containing the first two of these documents, formed the *Bible of Adam's descendants*, or the antediluvians. Gen. I.–XI. 9, being the sum of these two and the following three documents, constituted the *Bible of the descendants of Noah*. The whole of Genesis may be called, the *Bible of the posterity of Jacob*. And we may add that the five books of the Law, of which the last four are immediately due to Moses, were the *first Bible of Israel as a nation*."

SECTIONS.		DOCUMENTS.	
I. CREATION.	i.-ii. 3.	I.	1st Bible. 2d Bible. 3d Bible.
II. THE MAN.	ii. 4-25.	II.	
III. THE FALL.	iii.	III.	
IV. THE RACE.	iv.	IV.	
V. LINE TO NOAH.	v.-vi. 8.	V.	
VI. THE DELUGE.		VI.	
VII. THE COVENANT WITH NOAH.	vi. 9-viii. ix.	VII.	
VIII. THE NATIONS.	x.-xi. 9.	VIII.	
IX. LINE TO ABRAH.	xi. 10-26.	IX.	
X. ABRAHAM.	xi. 27-xxv. 11.	X.	
XI. ISAAC.	{ xxv. 12-18. xxv. 19-xxxv.	XI.	
XII. JACOB.	xxxvi. xxxvii.-l.		

It is to be remarked that the history follows the godly and covenant line, dismissing the outside branches more or less summarily, and passing on to trace the narrative in the course of the promised Seed. Accordingly it proceeds from Adam to Seth and to Noah, and thence through Shem to Terah and Abram, and thence to Isaac and Jacob and Joseph; not according to natural laws of primogeniture, but often through the younger sons, according to the election of grace.



It is interesting here to trace the *Messianic idea* in its gradual unfolding through the Book of Genesis.

The Patriarchal period has four great promises of the Messiah; one for each of the four great epochs—the FALL—the FLOOD—the COVENANT with ABRAHAM—and the BONDAGE in Egypt. Each of these is couched in terms suited to the time, and shaped by circumstances, so as to be most intelligible, by being clothed in the drapery of passing events. Meanwhile, between these great promises there occur significant hints of the coming Messiah, and traces of the idea in the minds of the people.

I.

ADAM.—THE FALL. Ch. 3 : 15.

The Messiah is promised as the BRUISER OF THE SERPENT. Our first parents would thus understand that there should be a great conflict between good and evil; that a *Destroyer of the Evil One* was promised, who should be “*the seed of the woman*,” of human birth—and a *Person*—not the race in general. “HE (not ‘it’) shall bruise thy head,” (ch. 3 : 15, *Hebrew*.)

Accordingly *Eve*, at the birth of her first son, exclaims, “*I have gotten a man, JEHOVAH.*” She here first uses the term “JEHOVAH,” and probably in its mere grammatical sense, as *He who shall be—the Coming One*, the most natural designation of Him who was promised, and who was not yet understood. God Himself assumes the term as a title of Himself in His redemptive capacity, and explains it (Exod. 6 : 3). And the historian (Moses) uses it as early in the record as in chap. 2 : 5, in connection with the absolute name of God—“*Jehovah God*,” planting the garden of Eden, and putting man on

trial there for salvation. In the line of Seth, in the time of Enos his son, the first grandson of Adam, in the third generation of the godly line—it is recorded that “*Then men began to call on the name of JEHOVAH*,” which implies that then there was a beginning made in the formal, public invocation of this redemptive name of God. This implies that there had been a further unfolding of the Messianic idea, so far as to exhibit the COMING ONE as God. There had been public worship before, at the gate of Eden; but this was a commencement made in the worship of the Promised Seed as divine.

We find this name used by Lamech at the birth of Noah, (ch. 5 : 29.) Referring to the ground as cursed by *Jehovah*, he regards this son, *Noah*, as the promised one, who would somehow remove the curse, and hence he calls him *Noah*—REST. But the true *Noah*, “*the Shiloh*,” (or Rest,) promised to Jacob, was another, whose coming this *Noah* only hinted of. We must look farther on for the promise to Noah. (See II.—NOAH.—THE FLOOD.) He uses the name and sets it in its proper light as referring to God himself, as “*God of Shem*.”

We find the name JEHOVAH used by Abraham with still fuller conception of its meaning. (See III.) (Ch. 24 : 3, 12.) The name occurs in Genesis *one hundred and sixty-two* times, either alone or in connection with *Elohim*.

Dr. Davidson, (Edinburgh,) in his “*Pentateuch Vindicated*,” takes the ground : (I.) “That the term *Jehovah* was known as an appropriate and personal name of the one living and true God from the very beginning. (II.) That the divine person who appeared visibly to the Patriarchs, and conversed with them, and entered, as the representative of *Jehovah*, into covenant with them, did

not take the name JEHOVAH to himself—did not make himself known, nor enter into covenant with them, *by this name*. This is implied in the notable passage, Exod. 6: 3. (III.) That the divine person who appeared to the Patriarchs and entered into covenant with them by the name *El-Shaddai*, and who “appeared” to Moses, and entered into covenant with Israel by the name JEHOVAH, was the *second person of the Godhead*, the Lord Jesus Christ, in his pre-existing nature and condition as God. (IV.) That though from the beginning the name Jehovah was known as that of the Eternal Deity, the invisible and incomprehensible God, *it was not known to be a name belonging also to the visible representative and Angel of God, the second person of the Godhead, till both at the bush and in Egypt the secret was revealed to Moses.*”

This first promise, however, called “the *Protevangelion*,” or first Gospel, was not the whole of the Messianic Revelation belonging to this first Period of the Fall.

Here was (a.) *The Institution of Sacrifice*. Already in the garden, this substitution of animal victims in a vicarious death for sinners was set forth as exhibiting God’s method of grace for atonement and salvation by a Redeemer. Vicarious bloodshedding was thus instituted, and blood became the standing symbol of atonement. Clothing with the skins of the animals slain for Expiatory Sacrifice, was the symbolical transaction by which God would exhibit his plan for the application of his grace. The individual faith was requisite that would put on and wear the garment thus provided. And in ch. 3: 22, the plan is definitely stated. The benefit of thus standing invested with the sacrificial raiment, “of putting on Christ,” is that “*the man is become as one of us.*” (Ch. 3:

42, notes.) This typical and symbolical Institution of Sacrifice embodied the ideas of sin and satisfaction, and all along through the ages of the ritual economy spoke of the COMING ONE, as to be a *Sacrifice* offered for sinners, and in whose raiment we may stand, accepted as one with Christ. The great leading idea of *Substitution* was thus early signified and symbolized.

Here, also, in the sacrifices of Cain and Abel, the great distinction was made between that which pointed to the coming sacrifice and that which did not.

(b.) Here also is set forth the cardinal idea of MEDIATION.

While the sacrificial victim set forth the great idea of substitution, the offerer of the victim, who was the Head and Father of the Family, expressed in his office-work the idea of MEDIATION. At the place of sacrifice the first man, the fallen father, is seen offering and interceding for his fallen human family. And thus the first Adam pointed forward to the second Adam, who was to be both Priest and Sacrifice, the glorious comer—God-man—Mediator and Redeemer.

(c.) Here, also, was set forth the idea of the GOD-MAN in the *Cherubim*. (Ch. 3: 24.)

This highest idea of Life, in this complex form, hinting of an Incarnation of God, and of an exaltation of man to a fellowship with God, was stationed at the Gate of Eden:—“the Ideal Manhood,” a great riddle, hinting of “the Mystery hid from ages,” the puzzle of human intellect—these compound forms, “the four living creatures,” mounted there together with a flaming sword “to guard the way of the Tree of Life,” and there inviting worship, as the Shechinah, or visible manifestation of God. In these prophetic similitudes Mercy and Justice were here met together, preaching hope for sinners at

the gate of Eden, and pointing forward to the Tree of Life as again to be enjoyed, and in the Better Land. Rev. 22: 2.

(d.) Here, also, in this Patriarchal age, was THE SABBATH instituted by God himself,—the seventh-day rest, as a sacred division of time, and a preparatory type of the Christian Sabbath,—as the creation is a preparation and type of the new creation,—a symbol also of the rest, the Sabbath-keeping that remaineth for the people of God, and into which they enter by virtue of His finished work who is the New Creator, and the victorious “Seed of the Woman.” Heb. 4: 9.

(I. a.) Here also was given a Prophecy and promise of the COMING JEHOVAH, by Enoch. Though not recorded in these brief records, it is referred to and cited in the New Testament, Jude vs. 14, 15. Enoch was “the seventh from Adam,” in the godly line of Seth—the seventh (as the sacred number) being the type of “the fulness of the time”—the epoch of perfection or consummation, when the redeemed church shall walk with God as Enoch did. He was a Prophet and prophesied of the Coming One as JEHOVAH, “THE LORD COMETH”—and of the judgment as to be carried on by this promised Seed—and of His coming with ten thousand of His saints—implying clearly the victory of the promised Deliverer with his “Seed” over the seed of the Evil One; and thus overleaping all intervening history, it points to the winding up of all things in the final judgment. This prophecy, therefore, would serve to set forth the Coming One, and the grand results of His work.

Here, also, in this connection and in the person of ENOCH, is exhibited the truth of AN INVISIBLE WORLD, to which the good are taken up in a victory over death; and that the triumphing faith which walks with

God is that vital principle by virtue of which he was translated, that he should not see death; “for before his translation he had this testimony that he pleased God.” (Heb. 11: 5.)

(II.)

NOAH.—THE FLOOD. Ch. 9: 26, 27.

More than sixteen hundred years had now passed, and the promised victory over the serpent had not yet been achieved. On the contrary, the powers of evil seemed to be gaining a mastery over the race, and no Deliverer had appeared among the posterity of the woman. The universal corruption provoked the wrath of God in an universal Deluge, from which Noah and his house were saved. NOAH becomes, thus, THE SECOND HEAD OF THE RACE—more especially the *personal head of the family of saved ones*.

Here the ARK was a type of Christ, in whom, and covered by whose merit and defence, believers shall outride the deluge of divine wrath upon sinners.

Here Noah builded an Altar unto JEHOVAH, (ch. 8: 20.) And “JEHOVAH smelled a sweet savor. And JEHOVAH said in his heart, “I will not again curse the ground any more for man’s sake,” etc. He, therefore, who covenanted with Noah as to the salvation of the earth from any future deluge of waters, was this same JEHOVAH, though He appears in that transaction under the absolute name of God, as the Creator.

Now that the earth, swept with the waters of the flood, is to be peopled, and the sons of Noah are to be distributed over the globe, Noah is inspired to forecast the promised deliverance in setting forth the destiny of his sons, Shem, Ham, and Japheth. (Ch. 9: 26, 27.)

“Blessed be JEHOVAH, the God

of SHEM." Here the personal relation to which God, in his redemptive capacity, enters with each of his people, is first set forth, and it is founded in their relation to His Eternal Son. By virtue of his sonship, they become sons, and this on account of the union between Jehovah and Elohim.

It is Jehovah who appears here in a special redemptive relation to the Semitic race. Besides, "*God shall enlarge Japheth, and he (Japheth) shall dwell in the tents of Shem.*" (a.) In the line of Shem spiritual blessings are to descend to Japheth, who is to have enlargement and to dwell in the tents of Shem; that is, to partake of his heritage, spiritual and temporal. These two sons, who were associated in their filial fidelity, are to be advanced in rank and authority over Canaan, the representative and the type of the evil power.

(b.) "The seed of the woman," promised as to come, is thus fixed in the line of Shem; and a beginning is thus made of a family lineage for the Messiah, to be traced through long genealogies to the Advent.

(c.) Shem is thus introduced in a relation of Mediator—the medium and conveyancer of blessings to his brethren—to Japheth, and to the descendants of Ham, excepting Canaan.

In this blessing an advance was made in the Messianic idea, by announcing a positive good in a covenant relation to God, and not merely the subjugation of evil.

(III.)

ABRAHAM.—THE COVENANT.

Ch. 12: 3; 18: 18; 22: 18.

An individual here, for the first time, receives from God a direct promise of the Messiah; and a further advance is made in the Messianic idea. "*Jehovah*," who was promised to be the God of Shem, reveals him-

self as the God of Abraham, and enters into covenant with him, as head of a faithful line, to inherit the "land of Canaan." This was significant of the promised victory of good over evil—that his seed should "possess the gate of his enemies." Abraham was to be the medium and conveyancer of divine blessings to all the nations and families of the earth. And this could be only by the transmission of spiritual blessings. This covenant promise was repeated to Isaac, (ch 26: 4,) and to Jacob, (ch. 28: 14,) "heirs with him." Thus "God preached before the gospel unto Abraham," in this promise, "The Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith." (Gal. 3: 8, 16.) He saith not "And to seeds, as of many, but as of ONE, and to thy seed; WHICH IS CHRIST."

Here, also, appears a personal and official type of the Messiah, in MELCHIZEDEK—a KING-PRIEST—to whom the patriarch Abraham paid tithes, and who blessed Abraham. (Ch. 14: 18.) This was full of significance, as Paul has shown in the Epistle to the Hebrews. (Ch. 7: 6.) And this Melchizedek was genealogically "without beginning of days or end of life—a type of the Messiah as *Eternal*."

Here, also, in the birth of Isaac, an intimation is given of the miraculous incarnation of the promised Messiah, (Rom. 4: 17-21,)—"the seed of the *Woman*," in this special sense.

Here, also, in the offering up of the covenant-son *Isaac*, is revealed to Abraham the New-Testament Isaac, the divine Son of Promise, to be offered up as a sacrifice; and in *receiving him from the dead in a figure*, (Heb. 11: 19,) is revealed the resurrection of Christ. Abraham, therefore, "*saw Christ's day and was glad.*" He called the name of the place JEHOVAH-JIREH, *Jehovah will see or appear.*

He calls God, "Jehovah, God of Heaven," and "Jehovah, God of earth." (Ch. 24 : 3, 12.) The patriarch's servant speaks of Jehovah, God of his master. And Laban recognizes the redemptive relation, when he speaks of the servant, as "blessed of *Jehovah*," (vs. 31.)

But the fulness of the time had not yet come. Still there is a series of delays and disappointments. Abraham must sojourn in a strange country, and Jacob must also go down into Egypt. The family enlargement into a nation must take place in that strange land, before the Land of Promise could be possessed by the Seed of Promise. There is, therefore, a further promise for the period of *bondage*.

(IV.)

JUDAH.—THE BONDAGE. Ch. 49 : 10.

Here, also, the Messiah is promised in terms suited to the circumstances of the time.

In bondage under Egyptian rulers, the SCEPTRE was promised to JUDAH, one of the twelve sons of Jacob. (1.) That in the line of JUDAH there should be the dominion. (2.) That the right of self-government should be retained until (3.) The SHILOH should come; and (4.) That

to HIM (the personal SHILOH—*Peace*, or *Rest*) the obedience of the nations should be given. Thus it is further revealed, (1.) How the nations were to be blessed in the Abrahamic seed. (2.) In what distinct branch of it (JUDAH) the blessing should descend; and (3.) That it should be by the advent of a personal SHILOH—of the *Promised One* who should be Peace, Pacifier or Rest. And this is "The Lion of the Tribe of Judah." Rev. 5 : 5.

Here is already a prediction of the THEOCRATIC KINGDOM, culminating in the Messiah's *reign of peace*. "*Our Lord sprang out of Judah*." (Heb. 7 : 14.)

Here, also, is JACOB'S LADDER, a vision of the way opened for communication and intercourse between heaven and earth. And this was the inspired revelation of the PERSONAL LADDER—THE SON OF MAN—upon whom the angels of God should ascend and descend, keeping open the communication.

Jacob, therefore, when he came to die, testifies of the Promised Deliverer, and of his faith in His advent: "I HAVE WAITED FOR THY SALVATION, O JEHOVAH." (Ch. 49 : 18.)

Lange notes this blessing of Jacob as a middle stadium of theocratic revelation, between the blessing of Isaac and the blessing of Moses.

APPENDIX B.

THE FAMILY OF JUDAH. Ch. 46 : 12.

Dr. P. Davidson, *Edinburgh*, explains, as follows: "The first difficulty is that in regard to the family of Judah which is found in the catalogue of the names of those who who went down to Egypt with Jacob,

contained in Gen. 46. I beg to introduce it with a few observations on the genealogical tables and list of names, contained in Scripture generally. And I remark, first,

"That the inspired men did not frame these genealogies, and are therefore not responsible for the difficulties or apparent discrepancies to

be found in them. No one, I presume, imagines that these lists of names were communicated to them by divine revelation. The inspired men found them framed to their hand, and brought down by tradition or by the public and private registers of the Jewish tribes and families. They were led by the spirit of inspiration to copy so much of these records as served the purposes which they had in view; and all that they were responsible for was, to give an accurate copy so far as they went. This is plainly all they had to do in the matter.

"I remark, secondly, That in their original state the Jewish genealogies must have been unchallengeably correct. For, as legal documents, and as involving the highest interests and honor of the tribes and families to which they belonged, they must have been constructed and preserved with the utmost care, and, when published, must have been open to the challenge and correction of every individual who had an interest or who felt an interest in the matter. This also is unquestionable; and it ought to give us confidence in these genealogies, provided we have no reason to think that they have been tampered with since.

"The third remark I make is, that at the same time no portions of Scripture were so liable, in the nature of things, to become dark and unintelligible to us and to all readers of other times. Why? For very obvious reasons. We know not the principles on which these genealogical tables were constructed. We cannot now trace the operation of the very peculiar laws and customs of Jewish society, as embodied in these records; and even the different names given in different genealogies to the same individual, as well as the same names to different individuals, are apt to lead us astray. Thus, with

the most perfect accuracy in the documents themselves, there may be to our minds the greatest obscurity in them, or an appearance of the most inextricable confusion.

"And what, then, is the practical lesson which these remarks convey? Plainly, that we may, most rationally, confide in the general truth of the genealogies of Scripture, even when we cannot harmonize them, or solve the difficulties which may be found in them. Take the genealogies of Christ, for instance, contained in the first chapter of Matthew's and in the third chapter of Luke's gospels. To harmonize these has always been a hard or impossible task to the Biblical scholar. I know not whether any unexceptionable way of doing so has ever been discovered. But ought this to stumble or distress the mind of any sincere believer in the inspiration of the Word of God? Not for a moment. These genealogies were doubtless copied from public and authentic documents, existing in the archives of the Jewish nation, or of the royal family. They were published when, had they been challengeable, they *could* have been and *would* have been challenged by thousands. This is enough to prove their original accuracy; and it only confirms that proof to add that, so far as known, they never were challenged until the principles on which they were constructed, and the peculiarities of law and custom which they embodied, had been lost sight of by those who challenged them, or has become altogether unknown.

"The truth and importance of these remarks will be illustrated in some measure by the difficulty, to the consideration of which we now proceed,—that in regard to "the family of Judah. That difficulty is shortly this: That in the list of the names of those who went down with Jacob to Egypt

(Gen. 46: 8-27), the names (Hezron and Hamul) of two of the grandchildren of Judah, who could not then have been born, are found. Yet you cannot leave out these names, or consider them as interpolated afterwards, for you cannot without them, make up the list of sixty-six persons, which are said, both there and elsewhere, to have gone down to Egypt with Jacob.

Such is the difficulty—the apparent discrepancy to be found in this part of the Pentateuch; and what are we to say in reference to it? I answer, that the difficulty may be solved, I think, in a single sentence; but it will take a good deal of explanation to show that solution to be sound and scriptural; and I beg to be allowed, therefore, to enter somewhat minutely into the subject. It is not necessary to quote from Bishop Colenso's volume, for I have little or nothing to say against his way of stating the difficulty. Generally speaking, his premises are sound, his calculations unquestionable, and his answers to Kurtz, Hengstenberg, and others, unanswerable. I do not mean, of course, that I assent to his conclusions; but merely to say that his data and calculations are correct, and that his answers to former solutions appear to be so. The solution which I propose has not, so far as I know, been before given; and being anxious to give it fully, I prefer to state the whole story with which the difficulty is connected, as I understand it. That story, as recorded in the thirty-eighth chapter of Genesis, is not a very pleasant or morally pretty one; but for the sake of truth we must be content to look at it for a little.

The story is this: When Judah, the fourth son of Jacob, was about twenty years of age, he married the daughter of Shuah, a Canaanite, and by her had (in three successive years, we may suppose) three sons named

Er, Onan, and Shelah. When Er, the first-born, became marriageable, (which we cannot suppose would be in less than sixteen years after his father's marriage, and when Judah, therefore, would be about thirty-six years of age,) he was married to Tamar; but "he was wicked in the sight of the Lord, and the Lord slew him." In other words, he died suddenly, without having a child. According to the levirate law of marriage, which then prevailed, and of which I shall afterwards have occasion to speak, Tamar, his widow, was, probably after some interval, given to his brother Onan to wife; but he also died suddenly without issue. Tamar was then directed by Judah to remain in widowhood in her father's house till Shelah, his third son, was grown; which she did; but afterwards, finding or suspecting that the requirements of the levirate law were not complied with, she, by a stratagem, entrapped Judah himself, and by him had the twin sons Pharez and Zarah. We might be tempted here to speak of the disgusting impurity and villany of these transactions; but we forbear. Our present business is not with the moral character, but with the facts and times of these occurrences; and it is very obvious that, when these two sons of Judah, by Tamar, were born, their father could not be less than thirty-nine years of age. And, therefore, at the time of the going down to Egypt, when Judah was certainly not more than forty-two, these children could not be more than about three years old.

Pharez was the father of Hezron and Hamul, whose names appear in the list of those who came out of Jacob's loins, and who came with him to Egypt. But how could that be? These children of Pharez, and grandchildren of Judah, could not be born till twelve or thirteen years

at least after the migration to Egypt; and how, then, could their names be reckoned among the sixty-six who went down to Egypt with Jacob? My answer is, that the names of Hezron and Hamul are not reckoned among the sixty-six; they are only mentioned parenthetically, for a reason that can be easily explained; and *that the names that are reckoned to make up the sixty-six are those of Er and Onan, the dead sons of Judah.* For though they themselves were dead, their names were still alive; that is, they had still the power and privilege of founding families in Israel, and were still "written," therefore, "among the living" in Jacob. This is the answer which I propose to support, and I shall do so as briefly as seems consistent with perspicuity.

1. Permit me to remind you how great an honor it was always esteemed to have a *living name* in Israel—a name, that is, enrolled in the genealogies of the tribes and families, and preserved to all generations. For, besides that the continuance of the inheritance in a man's family depended on this, it secured him also a kind of immortality on earth. His name was remembered as one of the builders of the house of Israel. Hence the blessing of having many sons; hence the curse of being written childless; and hence also the figurative language about being "blotted out," or "not blotted out," from the book of the living. And this honor, it should be remarked, would be especially cared for in the earlier days of the Israelitish people; for then the great, the chief families were being founded, almost all of which bore the names of the grandchildren of Jacob, who went down with him to Egypt, as may be seen in the 26th chapter of the book of Numbers.

2. Let me remind you, next, of the various ways by which an Isra-

elite might secure this honor of having a living name, even after his own death. The first and most direct way was, of course, by having one or more sons to represent him, to inherit his property, and to build up his house and name.

Another way was, if the deceased had daughters only, by these daughters, as heiresses, being married to husbands of their own kindred, and their husbands taking the name, and being written as the sons of their deceased father-in-law. Of this we have an appropriate illustration in the case of the daughters of Zelophehad, spoken of in the 27th and 36th chapters of Numbers.

But there was a third way in which a man's name might be preserved and numbered among the living, after his death; namely, by a younger brother or kinsman marrying his widow, and raising up seed to him. This was what is called the levirate marriage law, of which we have many illustrations in Scripture. We have a memorial of it, for instance, in the question which the Sadducees put to Christ, touching the resurrection, when they proposed the hypothetical case of seven brothers who had married one woman, and died childless.* We have an illustration of it also, I need hardly remind you, in the beautiful story of the book of Ruth; and in it we are expressly told that the design in view in the marriage of Ruth to the kinsman of her first husband was, "to raise up the name of the dead upon his inheritance, that the name of the dead be not cut off from among his brethren."† The law of Moses on the subject, also, was express and pointed: "If brethren dwell together, and one of them die and have no child, the wife of the dead shall not marry without unto a stranger: her husband's brother shall

* Mark 12: 19-57. † Ruth 4: 10.

go in unto her, and take her to him to wife, and perform the duty of an husband's brother unto her. And it shall be, that the first-born which she beareth shall succeed in the name of the brother which is dead, that his name be not put out of Israel:" literally, that his name be *not blotted out of Israel.*"*

But the story which we have repeated from the 38th chapter of Genesis is the most impressive of all the illustrations of the operation of this law, and of its design. It shows us, besides, that the law was not originated by Moses, but existed long before his day. It existed among the Canaanites, as well as the Israelites, and was probably one of those tyrant-customs (arising as Michaelis thinks, out of the custom of polygamy,) which no lawgiver can at once put down, but which he can only regulate and modify. The law is said to prevail still among the Mongols of Tartary and China, among whom also polygamy is rampant.

3. But without enlarging, I have only to remind you further how, by virtue of this law, Er and Onan, the dead sons of Judah, had a "living name" in Israel, or had a right to be named among the founders of the first and chief families of the nation, to record the names of whom was the very object of the list in the 46th chapter of Genesis. Er and Onan had a very peculiar kind of right to this; for Pharez and Zarah, the sons of Judah by Tamar, stood in a very peculiar relation to them. Let us confine our attention to Pharez. By the law of nature he was the son of Judah; but by the levirate law he may be said to have been the grandson of Judah, being the son of his daughter-in-law. And so in regard to the two dead brothers—Pharez, by the law of nature, was their younger brother, but

by the levirate law he was their son, being the son of their wife. This, however, gave the dead brothers only a double claim to have their names raised up, or preserved alive, *through him*. And accordingly it was so; for Pharez, instead of being the founder of one family in Israel, became the founder of three distinct families: as we read in the 26th chapter of Numbers. His two eldest sons, Hezron and Hamul, founded the families of the Hezronites and Hamulites; and then the other sons of Pharez bore his own name, and constituted the family of the Pharezites. Thus, I contend, the two dead sons of Judah were afterwards, through Hezron and Hamul, founders of families in Israel, and therefore, though dead, their names were not blotted out, but were to be counted among the sixty-six that went down with Jacob to Egypt.

And hence, too, the reason why Hezron and Hamul, though not then born, were parenthetically mentioned, though not counted, in this list of sixty-six names. It was through them that the dead sons of Judah afterwards secured their legal and acknowledged right. And here I may remark, by the way, that the construction of the verse that contains their names agrees with this supposition—that they were not to be counted, but were only mentioned as in a parenthesis: a fact which Bishop Colenso has either not noticed or has designedly suppressed; for in quoting the verse he changes its construction. The verse reads thus in our translation, which is perfectly literal: "And the sons of Judah, Er, and Onan, and Shelah, and Pharez, and Zarah: but Er and Onan died in the land of Canaan. And the sons of Pharez were Hezron and Hamul." The Bishop leaves out the substantive verb "*were*" in this last clause, and so makes it a continuation

* Deut. 25: 5, 6.

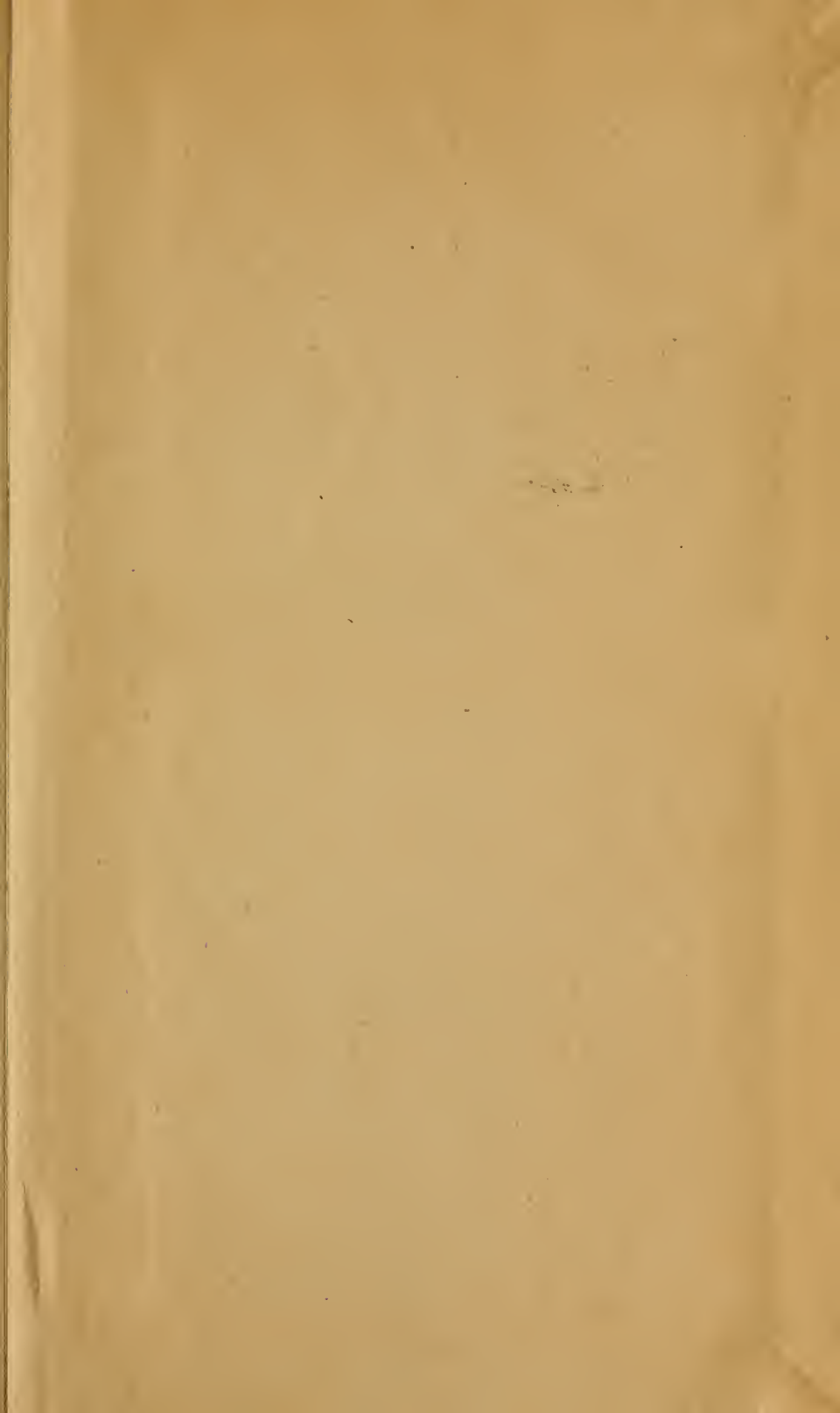
of the preceding sentence, whereas it is completely distinct, and, as we have said, virtually a parenthetical sentence. It does not mean that Hezron and Hamul went down to Egypt with Jacob, or were then born, but only that they *were* the sons of Pharez ; and this is mentioned because, according to the levirate law, they were to be reckoned the sons of Er and Onan, and became afterwards the founders of families in their names, or as their representatives."

THE END.

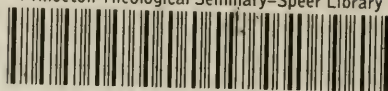


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